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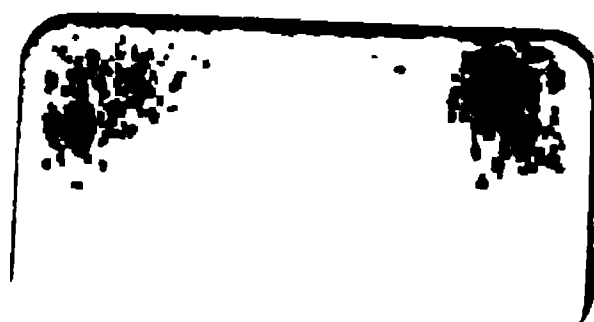
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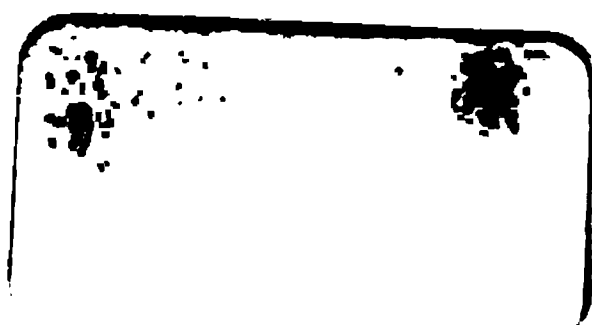




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A
S E R M O N,

&c. &c.

JOHN V. c. 2, 3, v.

Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches.

In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.

THE miracles of our Lord are not only evidences of the truth of that religion which He came into the world to deliver, but emblems also of the spiritual blessings which we have received from Him. Thus, if He cast out unclean and evil spirits,* He showed thereby that He came to destroy the dominion of “the prince of this world†,” and turn men “from the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Him‡.”

* Matt. viii. 16. Mark. 1, 32. Luke iv. 40. † John xii. 31.

‡ Acts xxvi. 18.

If He gave sight to the blind*, He shewed no less clearly that He was that "Sun of Righteousness" who arose "with healing in His wings†" upon a benighted world, and that they who follow Him "shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life‡." If He cleansed the lepers §, and healed all manner of sicknesses, it was that He might declare himself the physician of the soul as well as of the body,—that He might teach us to draw nigh unto Him in faith as unto one who can alone "cleanse us from all unrighteousness||," and strengthen us "with might by His Spirit in the inner man¶." If with a few loaves He fed the multitudes in the wilderness**, He did so that He might manifest that mercy which "filleth the hungry soul with goodness††" and which reminds us to "labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto us‡‡." If He raised the dead to life, still He proved Himself to be the "Lord Jesus Christ who shall change our vile body, that it may be like unto His glorious body according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto himself§§," and by virtue of which, He said unto Martha "I am the

* Mark vii. 37. † Mal. iv. 2. ‡ John viii. 12.

§ Luke xvii. 14. || 1. John i. 9. ¶ Ephes. iii. 16.

** Matt. xiv. 14. Mark vii. 34. Luke ix. 12. John vi. 5.

†† Ps. cvii. 9. Luke i. 53. ‡‡ John vi. 27. §§ Phil. iii. 21.

Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die*."

In all and each of these instances of Divine Power and Goodness, we not only confess, with Nicodemus, that Christ was "a teacher sent from God, for no man could do those miracles which he did except God were with Him†:" but we acknowledge also that He is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life;"—that "no man cometh unto the Father, but by Him"‡:—and that these things were "written, that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that, believing, we might have life through His Name§."—With these feelings, we receive the gracious records of the Gospel, as containing not only the purest principles, but the most perfect model of action. And, therefore, when we peruse such passages as that which is now before us, we cannot but feel that our duty does not terminate in the mere general acknowledgment of that transcendent Mercy which wrought these wondrous benefits upon the bodies of men;—but, remembering that those temporal benefits are emblematic of the blessings which reach, from generation to generation, to all such as with faith and repentance lay

* John xi. 25, 26. † John iii. 2. ‡ John xiv. 6.

§ John xx. 31. || Heb. xii. 1, 2.

hold upon them, we are supplied with an inexhaustible subject of thanksgiving, and a never failing stimulus “not to be weary in well-doing*.” Every scene of our earthly pilgrimage may be converted into a “Bethesda,” (i. e. as the word, in its original language, means, into a “house of Mercy,”) if it be sanctified by the spirit of christian love and obedience. Every trial and difficulty that we meet with, instead of being a stumbling block in our path, may thus be turned into a step of ascent towards Heaven ; and the sufferings of our frail estate be made the instruments of spiritual and eternal blessing. From those sufferings we cannot hope to be exempt : but if they be received on our part as marks of His Fatherly compassion who “chasteneth whom He loveth, and scourgeth every one whom He receiveth†,” and who, by making us feel the vanity of worldly joys, would lead us to seek after those which endure for ever ; we shall kiss the rod of Divine Chastisement, and say, “it is good for us that we have been afflicted ‡.” And if this be the result with ourselves, we shall wish that it should be so with others likewise : we shall pray, that they too may inherit the mercy which has been vouchsafed unto us ;—and that they and we may “be made one fold under one Shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord§.”

* Gal. vi. 9. † Heb. xii. 6.

‡ Ps. cxix. 71. § Collect for Good Friday.

But if this love for our brethren, springing from faith in Christ, animates our bosoms, it will surely manifest itself here, not in vain and empty professions, but in real and substantial efforts to promote their *temporal* as well as their *eternal* welfare. For as St. James saith, "If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled: notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful for the body; What doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone*." Active benevolence, then, it is plain, must be inseparable from the faith of the christian;—and this active benevolence cannot be exercised more unexceptionably, or more strictly in conformity with the direct precepts and constant practice of our Saviour, than in relieving those bodily suffering and infirmities which attest the sad penalty of Sin†.

It is to such an object, my brethren, that your attention is now to be directed:—it is to open wide the gates of that House, which most emphatically may be called "a House of Mercy," and to carry thither the indigent, the sick, and the infirm. The Institution, in behalf of which I have been commissioned to request your charitable support, is "The Sussex County Hospital and General Sea Bathing Infirmary," which stands within

* James ii. 15, 17.

† Gen. iii. 17.

sight of the very Sanctuary wherein we are now assembled to worship the Lord our God in holiness. The professed object and design of this Institution is, not only to provide assistance for the poor and afflicted at their own homes*, but also to afford effectual relief to the sick and maimed from every quarter. I say, *from every quarter* : for it is a point which I would wish particularly to press upon your attention, that the benefits, which this Hospital confers upon those who need them, are by no means *local* :—that they are not confined to this Town, or neighbourhood, or County, but are extended *freely* to all parts of the Kingdom. It is, as its very title declares it to be, a “General” Infirmary :—and, that the details of its operations are carried on in strict conformity with the plan which it thus holds forth to the public, you will readily acknowledge, when you learn, that of the 463 patients who have been received within its walls during the short space of fifteen months, not more than 158 have been admitted from this Town itself, whilst the whole of the remaining number (305) has been brought thither from places more or less remote. Not only have sufferers from the most distant Parishes in this County already been benefitted by the assistance which this Institution affords

* The number of *out patients* admitted since the opening of the Institution is 225.

them* ; but several from the Counties immediately adjoining our own ;† some even from the Metropolis itself ; and a few more from quarters still further distant.

This statement sufficiently proves that you are called upon to promote not an imaginary or chimerical project, but a positive and efficient means of diffusing widely real temporal good. It must be obvious also, that this Town, independently of the general healthiness of its soil and climate, possesses advantages which are calculated, beyond those of almost any other in the kingdom, to give an energizing and active spirit to these charitable purposes ; advantages arising on the one hand, from its proximity to the Metropolis, which secures every facility of intercourse ; and, on the other, from the concentration of medical and surgical talent which it has so long been its privilege to enjoy. This fact, though generally acknowledged to be as true as it is important, may possibly not always be borne in mind ; but surely it ought never to be lost sight of.—And filling, as I do, an office in this Institution, which, by leading me to administer to the spiritual wants of its inmates, gives me also the opportunity of knowing, by direct and personal observation, the assiduity and care with which their bodily

* For a more detailed account see Note A in the annexed statement.

† Thus, Hampshire has sent 5 In-Patients, Surry 18, Kent 20, and Middlesex 36.

infirmities are relieved, I trust that I may be permitted to bear my honest and impartial testimony to the truth, and say, that no child of sorrow, though he may lie upon beds of down, and repose amid every luxury which affluence of means or the kindness of anxious friends may supply, can be watched over with more consummate skill, more patient attention, or more considerate tenderness than is here gratuitously bestowed upon the poor and helpless sufferer. And if, in addition to these advantages, you take into consideration the wise and vigilant superintendence which is maintained over every minute department by its responsible Visitors and Governors, you cannot in reason require a greater security for the effective management of the Institution.

It remains for you, then, not to suffer its energies to be weakened or impaired for want of means. And that its energies will be so impaired, unless you support us generously and promptly, must be plain to every one who considers the great expences which necessarily attend such an establishment, even though it be conducted, as this most certainly is, upon principles of rigid economy. These expences must be great at all times; but, of course, in the infancy of its existence, a more than ordinary burden has been incurred from the requisite preparation of those internal arrangements without which the most

persevering efforts of its medical officers would have been unavailing.*

But whilst the attention of the managers has been directed to these points, they have still listened anxiously and kindly to every application of distress ; and no person has been rejected who was deemed a fit object of charity. The blessings, of which they are the dispensers, have been scattered with no niggard hand, with no parsimonious spirit. The labourer who is compelled “ in the sweat of his brow†” to “ eat the bread of carefulness‡,” but by some sudden casualty, has been struck down helpless, and brought in a moment from the enjoyment of rude and active health to that intense agony which causeth his soul to sink within him for very trouble, is carried quickly within its gates, and finds there a power which binds up his bruised frame, and a voice which bids him be of good comfort. He again, whose energies are enfeebled by the more slow, but not less incapacitating effects of pining sickness, and who feels his strength to be daily and hourly diminishing, is removed from the chilling abode of want and penury ; is cheered and invigorated by the same help, and enabled once more to go “ on his way rejoicing.”

What shall we say then, my brethren ? Shall

* See Note B in the annexed statement.

† Gen. iii. 19. ‡ Ps. cxxvii. 3.

we still be the instruments of lifting up the poor out of the dust, and of wiping away tears from them that mourn ; or shall we turn away from the cry of the destitute, and, like the Priest and Levite in the parable, cast on them only a brief and hurried glance, and then “ pass by on the other side ?* ” Let not this sin, I entreat you, be laid to our charge : let it not be said that we who *profess* Christ, can thus in “ our works *deny* Him†.” He ever “ went about doing good‡ ; ” He “ was eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame§ ; ” and whatsoever place was the scene of His merciful ministrations, whether it was the crowded city or sequestered village, whether the lonely wilderness or the open high way, whether in the synagogue, where the man with the withered hand was made by its restoration, to praise the power and the goodness of God ;—or at the pool of Bethesda, where He listened to the sorrows of the impotent man who had no friend to bathe him in its healing waters, we still have the same lovely picture of unwearied mercy and boundless compassion presented to our eyes, and every page of the Gospel reminds us that it is “ the word of reconciliation|| ” which proceeds from Him who Himself “ is Love¶,” and whose distinguishing commandment is that we should love one

* Luke x. 32. † Tit. i. 16. ‡ Acts x. 38.

§ Job. xxix. 15. || 2 Cor. v. 19. ¶ 1 John iv. 8.

another as He also first loved us*. To demonstrate that love, He left the glory which He had with the Father “before the world began†,” and “took upon Him the form of a servant‡,” that in lowliness and meekness He might bear our sins and carry our sorrows§. He hath taught us, by this example, the real character of our condition here, and the nature of that obligation which is annexed to the tenure of all temporal possessions ;—“For whosoever hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion toward him, how dwelleth the love of God in him ?||”

And if, “here we have no continuing city, but seek one to come;¶”—and in the course of our Christian progress, look unto Jesus alone as “the author and finisher of our Faith** ;” how shall we not have compassion upon those who are linked together with us in the bands of Christian brotherhood,—‘children of the same Father, with one hope and one home?’ Humility, remember, is the true source of Christian benevolence—‘humility, that reads its own lot in that of a fellow-mortal—and reminds us that all have sinned—that we are all strangers and pilgrims upon earth. It does not, like the benevolence of the world, seat you upon an eminence, from which, like some superior being,

* John xv. 12. † 2 Tim. i. 9. ‡ Phil. ii. 7.

§ Is. liii. 4. || 1 John iii. 15. ¶ Heb. xiii. 14. ** Heb. xii. 2.

you may fling a scanty and occasional pittance to the wretches whom you see struggling beneath; but it places you with them, side by side, toiling onward the same way, only better furnished for the journey, and called on by the voice of God and all the charities of the human heart, to reach forth your hand to your weaker and more helpless fellow-travellers’*.

If these principles be recognized in the Gospel of Christ, then none who profess to make that Gospel their hope, can safely disregard them. None can be justified in refusing their aid to promote our labours of love. As brother men we must feel for the distresses of others: as brother christians we are bound to relieve them,—“to bear one anothers burdens, and so fulfil the love of Christ†.” It is possible, indeed, that the painful realities which call for the exercise of such duties may be unheeded and unthought of by many of the children of men, who, all their lives long, have been nursed in the lap of luxury and indolence, and are strangers to every circumstance of poverty but the name. They who would adopt the language of the ungodly men described by the son of Sirach, and say “Let us fill ourselves with costly wine and ointment; and let no flower of the spring pass by us; let us crown ourselves with rosebuds, before they be withered; let us leave tokens

* Wolfe’s Remains. Sermon xi.

† Gal. vi. 2.

of our joyfulness in every place ; for this is our portion, and our lot is this*,” may live on from day and day, and year and year, in total ignorance of that “sore travail” which God hath “given to the sons of men to be exercised therewith†.” Little do they think that, while they are basking in the sunshine of prosperity, and revelling amid every pleasure, as if they had no other or higher object than to take their ease, “eat, drink, and be merry‡,” there may be seen on every side of them, the saddest realities of life in all their variety of form. But though they shut out this prospect from their view, they cannot do away with it. The careworn wife and famished children clinging to the arms of that father by whose strength they were enabled to eat, but who, enfeebled by disease and racked by pain, can no longer supply their wants or his own, are objects too dismal for the sons of pleasure to contemplate, and their cry is too irksome to be patiently borne with. But their cry, remember, is heard by “the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth Eternity§;” day and night does it come up before Him ; and if it should reach His throne, loaded with the unfeeling contempt and proud refusal of the brethren who should have listened and relieved, think with what fearful aggravation it

* Wind. ii. 7, 9.

† Eccles i. 13.

‡ Luke xii. 19.

§ Jo. lvii. 15.

will recoil upon the heads of those who have so fatally abused the talents entrusted to their charge. Do not, I beseech you, thus provoke the anger of the Lord: do not cast away the great and glorious privileges committed to you; but join with us, heart and hand, in upholding the welfare of that Institution, which would alleviate these miseries, which would visit the abodes of poverty with the light of hope, and cause the bones that are worn down with sorrow to rejoice*.

Let it not be said, that I am addressing many who have no interest in this place beyond that of the passing hour; who have claims of their own to satisfy at home; and who cannot listen to the demands of that charity which they are not locally connected. For I have said already, that the benefits which this Hospital confers are *not* local; that it professes to succour, and does succour the maimed and the sick from every quarter; and that the establishment of it in this place is a pledge for those blessings being diffused most widely and most beneficially. But if there are still any with whom these considerations have no influence, and who would close the hand of compassion, because it is a stranger who solicits their support, I would meet them on their own ground, and say, that the very fact of their

being only sojourners for a season amongst us, makes it imperative upon them not to turn a deaf ear to our supplications. For I would ask, can the high born and the wealthy assemble here, and not draw after them the poor and the dependent? Can fashion and pleasure spread out all their vanities of attraction before our eyes, and beggary and wretchedness not follow in their train? Alas! My brethren, you need not the voice of the preacher to remind you that such is and must be the necessary condition of this state of trial; that “the poor you have always with you*,” and that they who are “arrayed in purple and fine linen” cannot pass the threshold of their doors, without seeing there some forlorn Lazarus, “full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fall from their rich table†.” If this, then, is the result which inevitably follows from the present state of things,—if these are the broad lights and shadows which are scattered over the whole picture of life; and neither the palace of the Sovereign, nor the mansion of his wealthy subjects can lift up their heads, without drawing about them in crowds the lowly cottages of the poor, may we not, with good reason, intreat you to remember those whom your presence has attracted hither? If they have their duty to

* Matt. xxvi. 11. † Luke xvi. 21.

perform in working the labour of their hands with honest industry, so is it your part to lighten those burdens which the utmost vigilance and prudence cannot avert, and which, if there be none to help, must bring them to the dust. You may leave this place, and bear with you the recollection of happy hours passed here ; but will it not give a brighter and holier charm to those associations, if the consciousness of having helped the needy, and healed the sick, shall be among them ? Will it not impart a satisfaction to your mind far superior to those which the transient vanities of life can yield, to feel that the hours spent here have not all been spent in vain ;—that while you have enjoyed the gifts of Mercy, you have not been forgetful of the Giver ; and that, though absent in body, you may still be present in spirit, as you reflect upon the consolations which you have poured upon the aching heart and drooping spirit ? “ Cast thy bread upon the waters, and thou shalt find it after many days*.”

To those among you, who are tarrying on these shores, that you may, by God’s blessing, reanimate the strength of a languid frame, and enjoy once more the fresh glow of health, I surely may be allowed to make my appeal on this occasion, in the hope that it will be answered by

* Eccles. xi. 1.

your best sympathies. You can remember the pain and wearisomeness which you have felt in the night watches, when you have been “weary of your groaning,” and “watered your couch with tears*,” and have cried unto the Lord to “save you for his His mercies’ sake;”—you can remember how often you have echoed the lamentation of the afflicted patriarch, and have said, “when shall I arise, and the night be gone? and have been full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day†.”—And if the tenderest ministrations of affection have not been able to lull you into rest, think what must be the wretchedness of those who have no friendly hand to administer to their wants, and with whom every pang of bodily infirmity is increased by the sad accompaniments of cold, and nakedness, and hunger. This is no ideal picture of misery.—It is realized, every day and every hour, in the case of multitudes around you; and in the name of God and Christ, I solemnly adjure you to bear tidings of comfort to these your afflicted brethren. Let not the call be made to you in vain: let not the thought of selfishness “turn aside the current” of generous purposes. “Be merciful after thy power. If thou hast much, give plentifully: if thou hast little, do thy diligence gladly to give of that little: for so gatherest

* Ps. vi. 6.

† Job. vii. 4.

thou thyself a good reward in the day of necessity*.”—Even in the most indigent condition, the heart may yet go forth upon the errand of christian love: and if it be but “love to the brethren,” or a desire to help all or any of Christ’s poor, it shall be “accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not†.” The poor widow in the Gospel, who gave “of her penury,” offered nevertheless more than all “the rich men who cast their gifts into the treasury ‡:” and the same spirit of faith, which withholdeth “not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of the hand to do it§,” may be animated by the promise of Him, who, though He “seeth in secret, shall reward openly||.”—One single appetite restrained, one covetous inclination ungratified, one vain imagination “brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ¶,” may be the means, be assured, of carrying joy unto many: and surely, no man who thus labours to walk worthily of his christian calling will be a stranger to those “words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive**;”—a blessedness, which is placed before us in all the reality of living action, in

* Tob. iv.

† 2 Cor. viii. 12. see Jeremy Taylor’s Holy Living, c. iv. sect. viii.

‡ Luke xxi. 1, 4.

§ Prov. iii. 27.

|| Matt. vi. 4.

¶ 2 Cor. x. 5.

** Acts xx. 35.

that touching representation of the man whom
 “when the ear heard, then it blessed him ; when
 the eye saw him, then it gave witness to him :
 because he delivered the poor that cried, and the
 fatherless, and him that had none to help him ;
 the blessing of him that was ready to perish
 came upon him, and he caused the widow’s heart
 to sing for joy*.”

May this blessing be yours. May it be
 yours to feel the holy joy which attends upon
 these sacred offices of mercy ; which sanctifies
 the weak endeavours of man by dedicating
 them to the glory of God ; and which teaches
 him to look up from this vale of tears to that
 better and eternal world where “there shall
 be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying,
 neither shall there be any more pain† ;” where
 the sufferer who hath “in patience possessed
 his soul‡, and he, who, “in the name of Christ,”
 hath stretched out his hand to comfort him,
 shall meet once more in the mansions of their
 “Father’s house§,” amid the blessed company
 of the redeemed and “the spirits of just men
 made perfect||,” and shall hear those words of
 welcome, “Come, ye blessed of my Father,
 inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the
 foundation of the world : For I was an hungered,

* Job. xxix. 11.

† John xiv. 2.

‡ Rev. xxi. 4.

|| Heb. xii. 23.

‡ Luke xxi. 19.

and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me"—for "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me*."

* Matt. xxv. 34, 36, 40.

THE END.

Note A. p. 9. The following statement will show in what numbers, and from what various and remote districts of the County of Sussex, In-Patients have been received.

Alfriston3	Frant2
Ashburnham1	Framfield4
Barcombe2	Hamsey3
Bexhill2	Hardingly2
Bramber3	Hastings3
Broadwater & Worthing . .4	Heathfield2
Burwash1	Henfield6
Chailey3	Horsham3
Chichester2	Horsted1
Cuckfield6	Hurstperpoint5
	Hurstmonceaux3
Ditchling2	Itchingfield1
Eastbourne3	Lancing12
Edburton2	Laughton1
Falmer2	Lewes23
Farnhurst1	Lindfield1
Firle3	Maresfield1
Fletching7	Newhaven3
Folkington8	Newtimber6

Patcham1	Street1
Poynings2	Steyning5
Portslade3	
Preston5	Uckfield13
Ringmer2	Wadhurst2
Rotherfield4	Waldron2
Rottingdean3	Wartling4
	Washington2
Shipley4	West Grinstead1
Shoreham9	Wiston2
Southwick1	Woodmancote1
Storington3	

Note B. p. 11. Not only have the heavy expences of erecting and furnishing the Hospital for general purposes been incurred during the preceding and part of the present year; but within the last three months, a **FEVER WARD**, separate from the rest of the building, and capable of holding twelve patients, has also been completed.—Three patients have already been admitted into it: and when it is considered, that the immediate removal of these persons from their respective places of abode, has not only brought them within the reach of the most valuable professional aid, but may have prevented the spread of contagion throughout a thickly populated district, it is impossible not to see the immense advantages which must result from this department of the Institution.

A fresh and most powerful claim is hereby presented to the notice of the Visitors and Inhabitants of Brighton: and a claim, which, we are satisfied, will not be unheeded by them.

We would add in conclusion, that which must be highly gratifying to all who take an interest in the permanency of the Institution, to learn that the Committee of Management have already invested in the names of the Trustees, benefactions to the amount of £4467. 15s. to be held inviolable for the benefit of posterity.

14. 1829.
SPIRITUAL LETHARGY.

A SERMON,

DELIVERED AT

BERESFORD CHAPEL, WALWORTH.

BY EDWARD ANDREWS, LL.D.

LONDON.

EBENEZER PALMER, 18, PATERNOSTER ROW.

MDCCCXXIX.

the humbled soul, and I know also that they are not perfect before thee. O God the Father, let thy hand be upon the Man of thy right hand; upon the Son of man, whom thou madest strong for thyself. Again, "I know—that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." This, I apprehend, must be taken in a qualified sense; for the Lord speaks of "strengthening the things which remain;" and again, "that are ready to die." Therefore this argues that the people of God have been sometimes found so far to defalcate in things spiritual as to have become comparatively dead: that is, apathetic, careless, supine before God, while yet there has been no visible falling off before man; so that openly they yet retained a name that they lived.

It is to this disposition, or frame of mind, I would address myself this day; so that our subject now is—soul-lethargy; a most dangerous state. Not that God's people can finally fall: but that they lose much comfort by carnal security, and can have no good evidence, while that state lasts, that they are the elect.

"Strengthen the things—that are ready to die." Let us look at some of those circumstances that are unfriendly to the soul's health: ever keeping in mind that the quantity of spiritual vigour we possess, must depend on the agency of the sacred Spirit; yet as he may be grieved,—as he acts by means, and sometimes hideth his face to chastise

us for our folly,—it will, I hope, be found profitable to consider at leisure some of those facts, which, if we be not quite infatuated, we must allow decidedly bear on the present question.

May that Divine Spirit assist us while, in reference to the announced theme, we notice Causes,—Consequences,—Symptoms,—and Directions.

I.

Causes.

I mean the secondary causes of soul-deadness and lethargy in the people of God. I speak to you now as to the regenerated elect,—the converted,—the called by divine grace. Yet let it not be said I speak not to the world. Yes, I address them also,—only in the way of contrast; for, in truth, if the saint be addressed, the contrary character is not unnoticed. If we speak of spiritual comforts, the worldling will feel that he has them not; of joys,—that he feels them not; of wishes,—that he is not pervious to them; and if he be a man of some mind, and we speak so as to arouse and rivet his attention, he will at least perceive, that if we be right, he is wrong; and in this way we shall “give to every man a portion of meat in due season.”

Among causes of soul-declension, I would notice,—

1. Impurity.—Impure imaginations, unhal-
lowed thoughts, indulged. The Psalmist says,
“If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will

not hear me ;” and certain it is, that a single vile thought harbored in the heart will be like a noisome snake rolling over a mirror, and leaving the contamination of its track. Our old divines used to speak of heart-sins. These are like the wedge of gold and the Babylonish garment in the tent of Achan : for these things’ sake, wrath goeth out on the camp. “ Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts we beseech thee, O Lord, by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit ! ” “ For when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin, when it is perfected, bringeth forth death.” “ Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.” Remember, every sin begins in a thought ; and such thoughts as are impure and unholy have our natural depravity all on their side : the mind, in proportion as it reverts to the earth, and forgets heaven, becomes englobed in animal influences, imbruted, degraded, cleaving to the dust, and losing its dignity. How awful, for instance, is insanity ! With what horror we look upon a lunatic !—where reason wanders, or reels,—where the man is humbled and disgraced,—where the animal part rules over the mental, and the object of our contemplative pity has human limbs and a brute’s passions ! What better is he who in a moral sense acts the same part, without the same excuse ? It is clear that the soul’s original element is holiness ; all departures from this principle in the true child of God, who by con-

version is brought back to that original, will bring their own punishment. Let the mind be occupied with heavenly thoughts, that the plenitude of these may expel the contrary. Let not the arches, and galleries, and long-withdrawing vistas of the soul be filled with scorpions, and skeletons, and chimeras, dancing hither and thither in their own cloud and sulphur; but let the glory of the Lord rather fill that whole house of the Lord! Toy not with sin, even in idea: its fangs were not made to be played with, and its basilisk eyes have charmed, more than once, even a saint into follies which have made the church turn pale! Ah, Sirs! toss out the asp that lies hidden under the fruit! Death is a dear price for delight: it is madness to combat with the eloquence of sin, or to gaze on the pictures of passion. How often do we hear of dreadful accidents,—of children crushed in the streets, or drowned in the rivers, when wandering from their parents, or running out, either unconsciously or openly, against advice, into forbidden ground. What can the child of God expect, if he will run out into calamity amidst the chariots of heaven, earth, and hell, on parapets of danger, or in rivers of voluptuous roll, where ten thousand flowers perfume the margin, and ten thousand demons lurk beneath the wave.

2. Theology.—I do not mean that the study of theology is censurable; on the contrary, I recom-

mend it to all : but I refer to that love of novelty on which Satan, the arch-fiend, is so ready to work. The present is a day of novelties in the church. Some have found out, that they can very comfortably associate with Arians and Socinians, Jews, &c.; others have invented a most curious method of denying almost every proposition peculiar to the Gospel, and yet call themselves Calvinists; in another quarter some one suddenly arises who has found out, by books, that very shortly the Jews are to return to Palestine; and another, yet more wise, assures us that the Redeemer is, within a very few years, about to accomplish a military reign on the earth in person. In addition to all these schemes, it has become a matter almost of common consent in some other quarters to overlook the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, and to sneer down those who boldly declare it. It often happens, too, that some impudent reasoner stumbles upon certain old heresies, which he brings forward as his own, and he draweth away much people after him, till, finding it convenient to shift his ground, he loses his first adherents, and straightway establisheth a new college of simpletons. In the meanwhile, surrounding churches suffer from these things. "My son, meddle not with them that are given to change." O men of God, remember that theological subtilties are more dangerous than sceptical blasphemies, because you suspect no evil in them; but be assured they will eat as

doth a canker-worm : they are not Christ crucified ; they will satisfy Satan, your enemy, for the time, as well as if he saw you rioting in open sin, for they consume your energy and years, and greatly harden the heart. In such occupation you have indeed, as you think, your “ faces toward Zion ;” but you are sitting down, and building castles of card on the road, instead of hastening to the wicket-gate, escaping for your life, and staying not in all the plain. Theological subtilties may amuse the understanding, but will bring no balm to the conscience.

3. Politics.—These constitute another cause of soul-declension very often in persons truly pious, who are led away into such a vortex. There is something so large and exciting in these things, that men of strong feelings and fine understanding can seldom treat them moderately. What are the two subjects on which the best friends quarrel the most frequently ?—Religion and politics : for these two questions involve the moral affinities of the two worlds : politics of this,—religion of the next. But, my friends, what have we to do with Whig and Tory, or to settle affairs of state ? We are told to fear God, and honor the king, and to be in subjection to the powers that are, as ordained of God. If, indeed, any circumstance arise, in which we conscientiously wish to express our opinion, let us do it in the fear of God : but I repeat it, we need not become politicians.

The soul can admit but a given quantity of ideas ; her energy is measured out for every day ; if, therefore, we exhaust it on two subjects instead of one, we shall have the less left for each. He who spends his evenings in noisy conversation with loquacious neighbours, on the teeming subjects of the daily paper,—or his own more solitary hour in hunting down the tortuous statements of gazettes, and circulars, and parliamentary reports, will, I fear, have little time for the closet, and less inclination: I say again, beware of politics!—they are doubly dangerous: not only because they render you discontented, and gradually woo the mind away from its humbler sphere, but because there actually is in them much that may gratify a strong and capacious understanding. The mind loves even to stagger and stumble among coronets, armies, and thrones,—to listen to the whisperings of courts, the caballing of councillors, and the eloquence of senatorial harangues,—the fate of nations, the murmuring of revolutionists, and the acclamations of the million. In the meanwhile remember, that whenever the high saint has made this mistake,—the pastor, the deacon, or the elder of the church,—and become engulfed in politics, there has been a great dearth of spiritual comfort,—a great falling off. He who was hastily gliding down to the brink of a cataract, which might be avoided by care, would be very foolishly occupied the live-long day in sedulously observing

a company of persons fighting on the beach, and who paid not the slightest attention to his powerless vociferation and monitory gestures. They proceed in their labor, and we only add to our own by using up our life, given us to escape destruction, in eyeing their vain movements, and piously deploring that kings and senators will not take our advice. If nothing but the great and vast can suit us, and we must have political lucubration, let us rather be absorbed in the politics of another world: let us think of the council-chambers of eternity, and rise, as David did in prospect of the temple's building, to that God, whose is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: let us be enlightened and charmed, by contemplating the things of the kingdom,—the marvellous politics of that empire, which will exist and flourish when the old world dies!

4. Riches.—They that will be rich, make to themselves a snare. If great talents require great grace, so do large riches. We read of some to whom the Lord gave their request, but sent leanness into their souls. We sometimes see in churches distinguished individuals, who seem to have all the characteristics of piety but this one—a proper deadness to the world; their amiableness and usefulness seem quite marred by an inordinate love of money. How frequently it happens that God permits such men to become rich,

till suddenly, in their old age, by some miscarriage they lose nearly all, and then learn that they have put their "money into a bag with holes." You will say, perhaps,—We are in no danger of becoming so rich as to have our minds wholly engrossed in the preservation of our property, and its application to the best purposes. Be it so: but I have known some who have on a death-bed, in my own hearing, bitterly deplored the conduct and the fatal prosperities to which I have alluded. If you will make money your god, you cannot expect that Christ should be so too.

I might mention many other causes, which might be deemed below the dignity of pulpit animadversion; yet nothing should be deemed so that is important to christian prosperity. However, I will waive noticing them for the present; only saying, that at least they are "the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines; for our vines have tender grapes." It is in spirituals as in things temporal: a grain of sand in the eye, or a steely point, or thorn in the flesh, however small, may irritate and render feverish the whole constitution. I would reckon nothing minute which can affect the high and momentous destinies of the immortal soul!

II.

I would now notice some of the Consequences of this state indulged: and these will appear in—

1. Loss.—Great loss of spiritual comfort. This

is supposed in the very argument: for soul-
 lethargy and deadness imply paralysis, coldness,
 inaction, indifference; and where these prevail, of
 course divine joys must in that proportion de-
 crease. Is it not a strange view of human nature,
 that after all, this is what the fashionable reli-
 gionist loves? He must have some religion, but
 it must be a dead one; the figure of a profession
 he must have, but it shall be an automaton: like
 the affectedly-refined preacher, who stands up a
 man of pasteboard, and minces out his words
 with no other sentiment whatever, than the fear
 of being thought in earnest:—your even-speakers,
 as they call themselves! O man of God! is it
 not wretched for you to degenerate into such life-
 lessness as agrees with their notions?—such
 numbness and deadness as become an effigy,
 rather than a living man? Is not he in a hor-
 rible state who has fallen back ghastly on his
 pillow, and from whose open and gaunt mouth,
 though silent, the physician, with a mirror, is
 anxiously attempting to condense a few vapours
 of vital breath? What can a man enjoy who is
 half dead? What are dulcet sounds to him who
 is asleep? What comfort can be expected from
 the cross to a divided heart? Is not the kingdom
 of heaven to be taken by violence? Are we not
 herein to be zealously affected? Is not God to
 be inquired of for these things? And can we
 expect to enjoy that redemption which convulsed

heaven, earth, and hell, when we grow as forgetful of the first as we seem wedded to the second, and reckless of the last ?

2. Escapes.—When the Holy Spirit has so far left a child of God to himself, as that he shall embody these facts in his painful experience, he becomes comparatively without a protector, and is in danger of some actual and gross fall. “I have escaped,” said Job, “with the skin of my teeth ;”—“As for me,” said the Psalmist, “my feet had well nigh slipped.” It is amazing to think what our nature is capable of, when unrestrained ; and some of the blackest hours on earth have been those in which a saint has been left to stand in his own strength.. I sometimes think that a man of the world,—a superficial professor,—would wonder to hear us speaking of soul-buffettings, temptations, the plague of our own hearts, the possibilities of evil, and the like, and that he would think us truly “very bad people ;” and on this principle we are as barbarians unto him, and he is as a barbarian unto us. We are bad : but not in his sense of the word. What we abhor, he performs ; what we fear, he toys with ; and the character we dread, he realizes in his own conduct. Yet, if practically better than he, by the grace of God we are what we are : we feel, that if left to ourselves, there is no sin of which we could not be guilty. Now if we willingly and contentedly re-

lapse into a stupid and lethargic state, it is well if we do not, in some unguarded moment, lie open to a successful thrust from the great adversary of souls; we may be off our guard, but he is ever vigilant. O what a mercy it is to be kept living near to God: to be sanctified wholly! I verily believe, that next to Christ generally, the saint never gives thanks so heartily for any mercy as for that: I mean, the mercy of being delivered from evil,—of being restrained from sin. O Lord, he cries, with amazing fervor, keep back the unutterable hour; for should I fall into gross sin, I should afterwards, from excess of anguish, become insane: a Magor-Missabib: a ruthless horror: a demoniac among the tombs, and whom Christ himself would refuse to bind.

3. Fretfulness.—A poor, miserable, quarrelsome temper in the family, is always a proof of soul-deadness and carnal-security. How different the frame from that in which a Moses comes down from the mountain top, after communion with God; so that all may see he has been with Jesus! And what else shall produce that meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price? The Apostle says, Dwell together in love, that your prayers be not hindered. We have heard lately much concerning antinomianism: but truly this is one feature of it:—There are some who are “great folks” in the church; they can advise others, and rectify the preacher;

they can sit in the congregation, as if their countenance were the only admitted index by which to conclude on the correctness or incorrectness of the discourse; they are clear in doctrine, and solemn in colloquy; and if we were Roman Catholics, we should bespeak for them a place in the calendar: but when we come to hear of them at home, we find they are tyrants, rather than saints; their children and servants tremble when they return, to know what temper they are in; haughty, dictatorial, and morose, they far from recommend the Gospel to those around, who sometimes justify their own improprieties by such inconsistencies in men, who are deemed at other places the oracles of the true church.

But where infirmity advances not to this length, it may yet be necessary to give a caution against hot and hasty tempers. These bring guilt on the conscience, and grieve the Holy Spirit. That heavenly dove spreads a departing wing from scenes of turbulence and noise; the sun's face cannot be clearly reflected from the ruffled pool, and the brightest shafts of silvery light are broken into fragments, when thrown into a surface of perpetual and angry undulation. In addition to this, is it not lamentable to behold the petulance of a child in one to whom children and servants look up for an example? And is it not a gross anomaly in us, so far to forget our Master,—the spotless, patient Lamb,—as to become wolves and

vultures, biting and devouring each other. No calculation can over-rate the evils of haste or precipitancy in the general conduct of life; and if so, certainly as it regards our general temper and frames of mind. Most of the lesser miseries of domestic union may be traced to little misunderstandings, taken up in haste and answered in haste. I would particularly also avoid a tyrannical temper; yet, on the other hand, we may mistake that for tyranny in others, which is mere natural quickness.

4. Fastidiousness.—This will be another consequence of soul-declension: not only fretfulness in the family, but fastidiousness in the church. The man can now be edified by nothing: he criticizes the minister; no sermon can please him. One would think, if he were duly sensible of his own infirmity, and were living near to God, he would have neither time nor disposition to find so much fault. If, indeed, a preacher be actually deficient in doctrine, experience, and practice, some other should be sought: as the soul is too valuable to be complimented away, to please any pastor, or any congregational junto of clerical brethren by which he may be supported. But I am speaking of men to whom all preachers are, in one sense at least, alike: that is, they are all faulty. O monstrous vanity of the doctrinal Diotrophes! Does he think that pastoral labor, theological study, and ministerial prayer are

nothing? Does he, a layman, think himself qualified to cashier men whose whole life is devoted to that, of which his knowledge must, of necessity be very limited?—men whom he himself admits to have been called of God to the sacred office, and with whose mouth God has promised to be? A querulist of this kind acts by ministers as if their chief excellence was like the fragrant of the Egyptian reed, which can be extracted only by beating and bruising it. Alas, alas!—Nothing earthly can depress the elevation of such a man's eye-brows!

Let us notice,—

III.

Symptoms.

I mean the blessed symptoms of soul renewal: for, as I stated before, the Divine Spirit will not suffer the true heirs of promise to remain finally under such delusions and degrading influences as we have considered. God speaks once, twice, yea thrice; and though nature may say, like Eli to Samuel, Lie down again, my son,—lie down again: yet when God judgeth he will overcome: when he setteth his hand a second time to the work, his captives shall be brought back again. The symptoms of such a restoration in your soul will be—

1. Concern.—A holy concern for the unfruitfulness and backwardness of your spiritual state. The saint who has wandered long, returns to a

sense of amazing wretchedness. "O that it were with me as in months that are past, when the candle of the Lord shone upon my head, and by his light I walked through darkness, and the rock poured me out rivers of oil!"—when every ordinance was blessed: when from the rock Christ a holy unction descended to my soul! Now, alas, how altered! O my leanness! my leanness!

This is but a perpetuation and renewal of the very first impression of conversion; and what was that?—A holy, awful concern for an eternal world: now comes the same sentiment again; now stirs the infinite feeling; we stand on the edge of the world; we look at rocks and mountains of difficulty,—on wastes of untried being and the majestic spirit trembles in herself; that she may rest in the day of trouble. I think it may fairly be asserted that this soul-jealousy,—this suspicion of ourselves,—this constant dissatisfaction with our present attainments, and quickness of alarm at whatever may be below our privileges, and dishonourable to the Saviour, is one inalienable proof of grace, and is indeed quite inseparable from the Christian character, unless for the time overshadowed and benumbed by the lethargy we have deplored. "Look well to the state of thy flocks and thy herds,"—may be applied spiritually. The man of God is ever anxious to be right: and, when made conscious that he has wandered or fallen, in however small a degree, he is filled with anguish.

Another symptom will be found in

2. **Simplicity.**—By this I mean spiritual docility and humbleness of mind. “Learn of me,” says the Saviour, “for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” Those who have never duly felt “the plague of their own hearts,” will be “haughty” and “lofty,” in the senses in which the Psalmist deprecates such a quality. A flourishing professor, whose knowledge is only theoretical, will be found, however fair his creed, to retain too much of self in his modes of thinking and expression,—to want very little of Christ,—and, in reality, to be unfriendly to pure evangelical doctrines. It seems dangerous to say that good can come out of evil: but I hope I shall not be misunderstood when I assert, that after God has shown us our own vileness, we shall be more humble than before; our views of truth will be more simple and unassuming; we shall bow more cordially to the authority of Scripture; we shall be less disposed to question and to make difficulties. The logic of the heart will refine and warm that of the head; we rise above the schools into a higher stratum of thought, among ideas too mighty for the wand of the philosophic sorcerer; too massy for the quadrant of the geometrician. The light of faith can alone assist us now, and the golden reed which measures the temple of God!

Thus you will see in very old persons, as it regards things natural: They become more

simple; they want to be quiet; caballistic reasonings are not for them; they smile on their juniors, and say,—These things may be appropriate to you, and useful, but not to us; we have no longer any taste for them. And why?—Because the aged mind has long seen that subtilties are futile: that they depend on the dexterity of the disputants, and have nothing in common with truth, which is massy, simple, and sublime.

Thus it is in things spiritual. When by deep changes of soul-sorrows and joys, we acquire a larger experience, we seem to have become older: and like him who said, "*Homo sum unius libri:*" I am a man of one book: or, one book is enough for me—that is, the Bible: by which I mean not literally, that simplicity of spiritual taste excludes all books and all ideas but one: but that it renders every thing comparatively uninteresting to us, but Christ and his cross; that it comes accompanied with such a glow as makes the Gospel delightful, bringing with it its own evidence, and making us to abhor those mental snares, which have caught and seduced thousands from the simplicity that is in Christ.

This is one of the crying evils of the present day: an attempt to accommodate the Gospel to men of fashion, and, as they think themselves—of taste. And see how God contemns and dishonours such statements. He who attempts to set forth the Gospel of Christ in metaphysical reasonings, acts

more inconsistently than the man who publishes it to the poor in Latin; or, if in English, only in an unintelligible paraphrase: and I may add too, that the wit who hopes to restrain the spread of Calvinistic principles by cool and philosophic sarcasms, is like the fool who should attempt to bind with cobwebs the limbs of an infant giant.

It seems absurd to suppose that labyrinthian syllogisms can be necessary either in the statement or defence of divine truth. It is a light that beams from the throne; from the far-off glories of God; it is too impetuous to wait for the sluggish footsteps of the casuist: besides which, it appeals to a sense he has not: falling supernaturally upon powers that are not peculiar to genius and education, though assisting and aggrandizing both.

3. Alacrity—in the use of means. As these were comparatively slighted before, and as a consequent loss of comfort ensued, so now they will be highly prized. How does the sick man rejoice to leave his chamber of gloom, and walk abroad once more in the sweet and vernal air, where the meadow's flowery verge, and the balmy hay-field, with the wind-shaken copse, fling out under the blue sky a thousand perfumes, beneath the all-renovating sun!—where the song of feathered happiness on the branches, and the grateful lowing of the cattle on the adjacent hills, seem more

melodious and romantic than before. How then does the child of God, after long sickness, rejoice to come once more into the temple! Yes; but think with what still greater joy does he return to the full pleasure of ordinances, who had lost it long, not by physical, but by spiritual sickness: by soul-declension: when the temple had ceased to charm,—when the sermon only accused him,—when the Bible was a sealed book, and the Lord of life and favour seemed to hide his face for a time. Brethren! in any view it is delightful to enjoy an ordinance, after for a time we had lost it. Think with what pleasure the pious Jews returned from the land of Nebuchadnezzar, after their long captivity, to worship God in their own country once more! I could imagine the aged Jew,—while his eager grand-children hung upon his robe playfully,—I could imagine him looking up with his keen black eye, under impending brows, as he took down his harp from the willows on Babylon's streams; and how would he tell his children of the temple's pristine glory!—and how would he unwreath from the silencing foliage that harp that had slumbered long, whose master-chord was broken!—and how would he wake its ecstasies once more!—and how, with all the host, would the journey homeward seem short and easy; while the mind was almost rioting in delightful anticipations! Such, my friends, is our joy, when we turn our feet towards the temple, and leave the world for an hour.

4. Caution.—After the soul has been greatly humbled, there follows a great tenderness of conscience: a fear to offend again. My brethren, while you fear sin you will never fall into it. I have observed even in cases of illness, where a child of God has been brought back again to the family,—restored from the gates of the grave,—I have observed, in such cases, an amazing tenderness of conscience: a wish to live nearer to God than before; and in coming down into the family once more, a scrupulosity in doing this or that, as if the soul would now say, Cannot I do something more for the glory of God than this will be? So, after spiritual recovery, there will be a great dread of lapsing again. What must have been the feelings of St. Peter, when they came and told him of Judas's death? When the great Apostle was perhaps engaged in prayer or penitence, shut in from the world with tearful eyes, while perhaps he heard at the moment the axes of the artificers hewing down the three crosses, on the middle one of which Christ had died,—yea, perhaps at that very moment the soldiers might be carrying away on their shoulders, with blasphemy and halloing at each other, the very cross on which the Saviour had expiated sin,—perhaps it was just then passing under his window, still clotted with purple gore when some of his brother-disciples came in, all aghast, and said, Have you heard what has happened?—Alas! he would say, I can hear of

nothing—I can think of nothing but my own apostasy. Oh! say they, have you heard that Judas has thrown down the money in the temple, and is now a corpse by his own hand?—that hanging himself, he fell down in the midst, and is gone to his own place? Think, if you possibly can, what must have been Peter's feelings at the sudden and unexpected recital! What! he would say, Judas the treasurer!—the orator! And am I spared? Judas sold his Master!—I denied him! O miracle of grace!—to him, severity: to me, goodness! Ah, sirs, with what awe-struck gratitude would he hear of this distinguishing grace: and how would he dread a second aberration!

I will now only notice—

IV.

The Directions

Which this subject requires, or rather suggests to those who, having been recovered by divine grace from a state of declension, and comparative deadness, are desirous of enjoying, in future, greater nearness to God, and of maintaining, in the highest sense, the privileges of a life of faith. Be cautious, then, as it regards—

1. Preachers.—Take heed what you hear. There is more meaning than any of us suppose in that language of the Holy Ghost: Like people like priest. If we be spiritual, we shall seek a spiritual preacher. When God shines forth there,

throne of light—not else :
 where the light is. I cannot
 see the sun, if I look for him in a
 place where my face turned away from the
 light in which he burns. But
 wherever you may sit,—however
 ungodly he may be,—remember
 the Holy Spirit : while the
 preacher is speaking, let the people be praying ;
 let his sermons into prayer. I can
 see nothing more awfully grand, and yet
 more powerful than a whole congregation evi-
 dently drawn up to God, while some faithful
 minister is attempting to declare in the midst of
 the innumerable riches of Christ.

These exercise a great influence
 on religious books : but let them be
 highly spiritual. Why should we
 strain our weary eye-ball, by admitting in-
 formation into the brain, which can be of no
 use to us ? What a thesis of solemn re-
 flection to furnish to review, seriously and
 soberly, of our past perusals, and to
 compare the proportion of time we have given
 to spiritual readings ! I mean, to
 compare the number of pages we have
 read of the temporal, and then of works spi-
 ritual, it is astonishing to see how much the
 quantity of ideas that pass
 through the sandy stream of science

and of secular life to roll by, because it cannot be avoided, and the riches it leaves on the mind's surface must perish with itself; but the vast ocean of eternity, as it flows in upon us from time to time, though ebbing daily, will leave, at every interval, the saturated soul covered with the gems and the gold of another world!

3. **Company.**—Let us be anxious to associate only with those who are truly pious. Indeed, in any other society we are but surrounded with demons. What have we, in common with men who abhor the Saviour, and who are, in truth, abusing privileges which fallen angels never enjoyed? Yet I think more harm may arise from the society of those who are only theoretically religious, than from the openly profane. Of the latter we are aware: of the former we are not; they are like whited graves, over which we walk unwittingly. The open blasphemer we rebuke; and of him and his party it cannot be said that “Christ is wounded,” as he is by the others, “in the house of his friends.” It should be remembered, that of other circumstances into which the mind comes in contact, the influence must be more limited; but in the question of society it is mind with mind—soul mixing with soul. True it is that matter may operate on mind, and thus change its acts, and affect its habits. This may occur, and lamentably, while yet the mind's principles are not altered; but it is the collision of

spirit with spirit that can alone alter principles ; and hence it becomes of infinite importance to select our companions, and to keep the mind ever on its guard against the influence of evil communications, which, it is admitted, have a strong tendency to corrupt good manners.

4. Closet.—Be much in prayer. The subject resolves itself into this one thought ; for all spiritual declension begins at the closet door. Restrain prayer before God, and the worst consequences must follow. O for a spirit of grace and supplication to be largely poured out upon us all ! And what a comfort is prayer !—It brings us to the edge of heaven, and borrows refreshment from the land that is very far off. He who looks at the ocean faces the purest air : so, in the evening of hot and sultry thought, the cool breeze is to be had only from the Eternal Sea. As I have said before, “so I say again,” that in temporals and spirituals, great mountains fall before prayer !

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ON SUNDAY THE 17TH OF MAY 1829.



BY THE REVEREND

JAMES WALKER, D. D. F. R. S. E.

OF ST JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE;

AND EPISCOPAL PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY IN EDINBURGH.

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TO THE
MANAGERS AND MEMBERS
OF
THE EPISCOPAL CONGREGATION

ASSEMBLING IN

St Peter's Chapel, Edinburgh,

THE FOLLOWING SERMON IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,
WITH FEELINGS WHICH, I AM PERSUADED, THEY
WILL APPRECIATE, THOUGH I WILL NOT ATTEMPT
TO EXPRESS THEM. THAT THEY MAY BE HAPPY IN
TIME, AND THAT THEY AND I MAY BE FOUND AMONG
THE REDEEMED OF OUR LORD IN ETERNITY, IS, AND
WILL EVER BE, THE HEARTY PRAYER OF THEIR SIN-
CERE FRIEND,

JAMES WALKER.

ADVERTISEMENT.

I send this Sermon to the press solely at the earnest solicitation of many kind friends who heard it. The occasion interested them, as it deeply affected myself, both when I was writing, and when I came to deliver this my last discourse, as Pastor of a Congregation with which I have been so long connected, and from which I have received many marks of kindness. I am quite aware, that, beyond the locality (if I may so speak) for which the Sermon was prepared, it can excite little interest, and merit no attention. If, however, it shall tend, by God's blessing, to cherish and preserve in the minds of those who desire to possess it in print, those serious and solemn views of our condition, as Christians and candidates for immortality, which the circumstances under which it was written and delivered suggested to my mind, I shall be more than satisfied.

J. W.

Edinburgh, 21st May 1829.

A

FAREWELL SERMON.

2 CORINTHIANS, XIII. 11.

Finally, Brethren, Farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace ; and the God of Peace and Love shall be with you.

THE final farewell which precedes the permanent separation of those who have been connected by long habits of personal intercourse, accompanied by specific ties of reciprocal obligation, is an act of great and affecting solemnity. The various associations of the past, and the doubtful anticipations of the future, combine their influence and increase the effect of every such separation, as it is

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calculated to affect the mind in our peculiarly transient and uncertain condition. There is no tie more interesting than that which connects the Christian minister with his congregation ; because the specific object of it is to combine the interests and the hopes of eternity with the conduct and the duties of time. The people who form our Christian flock are required so to account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God ; and it is specially required in us stewards that a man be found faithful, 1. Cor. iv. 1, 2. Faithfulness in the exercise of our office is the essential, the indispensable requisite. We are mere ministers, indeed ; but the object of our ministry is of paramount importance. “ Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us ; we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God,” 2. Cor. v. 20.

When we seriously consider the nature and the object of this high and holy commission, as they are thus exhibited, we cannot fail to feel that the formation of the pastoral connexion is an act of the most solemn importance. For who, alas ! among the frail sons of mor-

tality, “is sufficient for these things ?” 2 Cor. ii. 16. This will be especially felt by every sincere and serious minister, when he comes deliberately to dissolve the connexion thus formed after it has long subsisted ; because then he is compelled to reflect on the general imperfection and insufficiency of those ministerial labours which are now to cease ; of which he cannot hope, by any system of self-delusion, to conceal the deficiency which he feels, and which, in such circumstances, he is compelled to acknowledge. I stand before you at this time for the purpose of dissolving for ever that connexion which was formed between us by the earnest and unanimous desire of this congregation, as it subsisted two-and-twenty years ago. Many important changes have occurred among us during that period. Many of those who then made up our number, and who took an active and a Christian share in our concerns, have finished their course in faith, and do now rest from their labours : while, of those who remain, others are following from day to day, leaving to us the deep and the solemn warning,—“ Therefore be ye also ready ; for, in such an

hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh."—Matt. xxiv. 44.

I thus present myself before you with no affectation of feeling, and with no pretence of humility. Affectation is always out of place in the exercise of the Christian ministry. It is a contemptible exhibition in all circumstances, even of our ordinary life ; but it would be especially out of place, and criminal even, on an occasion which necessarily directs my attention, and I would hope yours also, to considerations of the deepest interest, both past, present, and prospective. This is the last occasion which I shall ever have of addressing you in the relation which has so long subsisted between us. In looking back, as the occasion compels me to look back, on the commencement and the course of this connexion, I feel, with a deep and a self-abasing conviction, that I have attained less, much less than I expected and hoped, when I yielded reluctantly to the desire of those with whom it was originally formed. In recollecting my first resolutions and my earliest hopes, I can, in all sincerity of heart, declare that I desired not yours but you. Yet,

though I have never been intentionally deficient in any duty incumbent on me and in my power, I feel that I have never completely fulfilled those resolutions, nor ever competently realized those hopes. The sincerity of my purpose has never subsided; though my practical exertion has not always been equal to my wish nor correspondent with my intention. With the experience which I now possess, had I to commence my career a-new in the vigour of life, there are some things which I have done, which, by God's blessing, I would not do, and some which I have left undone, which, with the same Divine aid, I would endeavour to do. These are vain regrets, though they are brought forward for no vain purpose. They are brought forward in awful warning to you and to myself, that, while our day of salvation, through the long suffering of God, yet lasts, though it is fast hastening to its close, we may at length be roused, by God's grace, to give diligence to make our calling and election sure,—that so an entrance may be ministered unto us abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

I have sought to dissolve the relation which subsists between us, because I have found, by manifold proofs, that, situated as I am, I am now unequal to the exertion which even the most ordinary duty requires. I have sought this dissolution under the influence of emotions which I will not attempt to express in any shape. They may indeed be much more easily imagined than I could express them, especially by those who, with any portion of the feelings which have lately occupied my mind, recollect my early and frequent intercourse with this congregation during a period of fourteen years before my pastoral connection with it was formed, who remember that it was thus formed in consequence of that intercourse, at their desire and not by my solicitation, and who consider, at the same time, that I never stood in the same relation to any other religious community. Popularity, as it now agitates the religious world, I never sought, and never possessed. Indeed, when I commenced my professional course, we stood on somewhat firmer and better ground, less ensnaring to the minister and more creditable to the people. In this way,

I possessed for many years, as my brethren before me and around me possessed, what was much more valuable than mere mob popularity, the kind consideration, and the steady adherence, of a well instructed community, generally attached, on sound and solid principles, to the peculiarities of the church of which they were members. This is a ground of adherence which, founded in Christian principle, will generally survive the highest pitch of mere personal popularity, which is always fleeting, as the vain passions are which it excites, and by which it is nourished. He who is carried by mere personal feeling towards Paul to-day will be found running with equal eagerness after Apollos to-morrow—and anon he will crowd the adherents of Cephas; without reflecting, in his rapid race after effect and novelty, that we are expressly and solemnly prohibited from glorying in men,—1 Cor. iii. 21.; that Paul, Apollos, and Cephas were ministers merely, who planted with industry and watered with skill, but God only gave, as God only can give, the increase. For we are labourers together with God: Ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. For other founda-

tion can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

When we come in silence and sincerity to sum up our account, at the close of our labours, as ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God, and when we hold in anticipation the award which awaits us at the great day of final reckoning, we shall indeed feel the utter insignificance of even the highest attainments of mere human applause and of mere personal popularity. We shall then feel in perfect unison with St Paul, when he says, in reference to his own ministry and stewardship, "But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified; but he that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore, judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart; and then shall every man have praise of God,"—1. Cor. iv. 3, &c.

Rash judgment, whether it be friendly or censorious, is always dangerous. It originates

in ignorance and prejudice. It leads to error, and error always leads to evil. The ministers of Christ, in every age, have been peculiarly subject, and, in the special exercise of their office, to rash, and frequently to censorious judgment, greatly injurious to them and to the influence of their ministry, but much more injurious to those who thus habitually disobey the express command of God ; “ Judge not, that ye be not judged.”—Matth. vii. 1. This evil has increased of late years both in magnitude and in malignity. Ministers the most orthodox, and stewards the most faithful, are subjected to the severest and most censorious judgment by persons who are in all respects incompetent, who, in utter ignorance, and under the influence of the most perverted views, accuse all who stand beyond the range of their peculiar circle, of hostility and opposition to that blessed gospel of which they are the ministers. For myself, I can scarcely even conceive a minister of our church who is not, in the proper sense of the term, a gospel minister. If he be tolerably instructed in professional knowledge, and, at the same time, honest and sincere, he cannot

fail to be such : for the essential truths of the gospel, in all their practical plainness, and in all their systematic symmetry, are ever before him in the sacred services which he is required to celebrate. They are, as our Church is happily constituted, the materials of his ministry. Every thing is evangelical, in the highest and best sense of the term ; and this evangelism is practical, not controversial. If the people duly attend to the system by which we are necessarily guided in all our ministrations, we can never, in any important matter, seriously mislead them.

Those partial views of gospel truth, which are now so commonly urged on Christian attention, have bred much mischief in the Church. In their exclusive and emphatic announcement they are generally combined with an eager spirit of controversy, which receives its aliment from many carnal passions, even when the language in which they are urged is most spiritual in sound and most sacred in pretension : while the spirit in which they are thus supported is essentially opposed to that unity of principle, and therefore to that peace and purity of practice which are univer-

sally enforced in the word of God. The gospel, as it embraces all Christians, is practical, or to them it is nothing. When the spirit of the gospel comes into full operation, it changes the heart ; and when the heart is thus changed, a new impulse is given to all the moral powers of the renewed Christian, imparting peace of mind, purity of purpose, and correctness of conduct. These effects he happily feels. They are the evidence of his condition : for, in every Christian really renewed, they are in active and in uniform operation. He feels, at the same time, that he is the happy agent. He feels, also, that he owes the power of this happy agency wholly to the guidance of that spirit which the gospel reveals and imparts. If Christians, yielding to the guidance of this spirit, would learn to devote themselves more to practice than to speculation, their religious knowledge would, in all respects, become more comprehensive and more correct, in proportion as those carnal appetites and wayward passions, which obscure our knowledge as they impede our practice, become gradually subdued, and give place to increasing purity of purpose and propriety of

conduct. If Christians would devote themselves earnestly to their own personal duty, to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling, in the certain conviction that it is God which worketh in them both to will and to do of his good pleasure, instead of rashly judging their neighbours, the influence of the gospel on our hearts and on our lives would be greater and more salutary than it is. "Lord, and what shall this man do?" is a question which we are not entitled to ask,—to which the only proper answer is, "What is that to thee? follow thou me." The duty of each individual is plain, and the aid which he requires is ever ready and sufficient, if he be willing to yield himself to the faithful performance of all his Christian obligations.

That practical purity, curing by God's help the corrupt and carnal affections of our mortal nature, is the great aim and object of the Christian institution, whereby we are made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light,—Col. i. 12.—will appear from a rapid view of the import of my text, compared with the other scriptures which combine the fundamental principles with the indis-

pensable practice of the gospel system. *Finally, brethren, farewell.* This is the ardent wish, or the fervent prayer of pastoral charity, in absence or cessation of intercourse anticipated. That the object of this pious prayer, rising out of professional solicitude, may be happily fulfilled, the Apostle adds, *Be perfect.* That this perfection is an attainable quality we cannot doubt, since it is thus distinctly commanded. It consists, first, in yielding the heart to the guidance of God's holy Spirit, without which we can never attain any Christian object. It consists, secondly, in unity of principle, which is the practice of Christian charity, as that heavenly disposition embraces all human kind, but especially them that are of the household of faith. It is equivalent to the command in the sermon on the mount,—*Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.* This command, in any intelligible sense, we can fulfil, by the aid of God's grace, only by the most distant approximation. In God, the quality or attribute referred to is mercy, which is over all his works: For “he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on

the good, and sendeth his rain on the just and on the unjust." This illustration sufficiently indicates, that in Christians the quality commanded is charity, which requires us, in humble, and in distant imitation of the divine attributes of mercy and goodness, to love our enemies, to bless them that curse us, to do good to them that hate us, and to pray for them who despitefully use and persecute us. *Be of good comfort.* He who, by the grace of God, is enabled to attain and to exercise the charity which the previous precept commands, will never, even under the pressure of the severest calamities, want that good comfort and that solid consolation which come from God. For the charity, which he is thus enabled to cultivate, makes him the child of his Father which is in heaven, and exempts him, by the special ordinance and influence of God, from the worst evils with which humanity can afflict him. *Be of one mind ; live in peace.* To be of one mind implies unanimity ; and to live in peace, the consequence of this unanimity, implies the obligation which the gospel imposes upon us to endeavour, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-

suffering, forbearing one another in love, to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. Such being the happy principle, and such being the salutary practice of your Christian life, *the God of love and peace shall be with you*, that is, the greatest blessing, the highest consolation, which can accompany your mortal career in your passage through the troubles and trials of time to the heavenly joys of an endless life. In the world there is discord and enmity, and violence, with which He who maketh men to be of one mind in a house can have no communion. That we may ensure the habitation of the Prince of Peace, and of the Spirit of Comfort in our hearts, and in our mystic Zion, we must be all of one mind ; and to be all of one mind implies much more of practice than of speculation. It implies that we have compassion one of another, that we love as brethren, that we be pitiful and courteous, not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing : knowing that we are hereunto called that we should inherit a blessing.

In the long and interesting discourse which is recorded by St John in the 14th, 15th, and

15th chapter of his Gospel, concluded; Lord dwells with a peculiar emphasis, and with a very affecting pathos, on this high and holy principle of Christian unity. He prays for his disciples, to whom the discourse was addressed; and not for them alone, "but for them also," he adds, "which shall believe on me through their word, that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are: that I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved me." The importance of this agony we may much more easily imagine than express; if we allow them most remarkable words, and the circumstances in which they were uttered, their proper influence on our hearts. Twice, in this short compass, does the Divine Redeemer sustain this practical unity amongst his followers to be the most decisive proof of His own divine mission; the most effectual evidence of that

divine influence which constitutes and conducts the Christian life from its commencement to its close.

This unity, which is the principle of charity reduced to practice, in peculiar circumstances, is founded in truth, in that essential truth which God has revealed in Christ. "Sanctify them," says the Divine Redeemer, "thro' Thy truth: Thy word is truth—and for their sakes I sanctify myself that they also may be sanctified thro' the truth." It is manifest, if we could all be brought to agree in the essential truths which constitute the Gospel, and in the practice resulting from those truths, that the unity, which is so necessary an ingredient in the Christian character, would be the happy consequence. In the meantime, there have been from the beginning, and there must also be to the end, "heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." As man is constituted, nothing is more difficult than to produce agreement, in those truths especially which affect the conduct, and which influence the passions. Even the truths of science, and the events of history, excite the hottest disputes

wherever the passions of the disputants become engaged in behalf of different results and of rival parties.

Man is so constituted, so subject to error in all circumstances, and so surrounded with conflicting opinions on all subjects, that, while he continues in this imperfect condition, it is utterly impossible to hope for a perfect agreement in opinion, even among good men, and with respect even to the most essential truths.

The phrase in my text, "*Be of one mind*," does not imply this perfect agreement, which the apostle well knew to be a hopeless expectation. It is a practical injunction. It imposes restraint on that exclusive eagerness with which men seek to enforce on others their own opinions and their own phraseology. With this restraint, and with the Christian forbearance on which it is grounded, properly and habitually applied, the most common causes of disunion among Christians would be most happily removed. Men may be perfectly unanimous in all Christian conduct, in all necessary duty, and in all charitable judgment, though they differ somewhat in their apprehension and in their explanation of the truth which they yet equally acknow-

ledge. There are certain truths, the leading truths of the gospel, the peculiarities which distinguish it from every other system, so important and so essential, that all men who profess and call themselves Christians must, of necessity, acknowledge them. But those truths have been, and they may be, acknowledged, in a full, a saving, and a practical sense, though with some considerable variety in the mode of apprehending, and even in the manner of explaining them. All the leading truths of the gospel conduct us essentially to practice, to purity of heart, to charity of judgment, to habitual devotion, and to the uniting together as brethren and as friends in the public solemnities of the sanctuary. Whatever various modifications the leading and essential truths of the gospel may take in the minds of various men, the practical result will be the same, unless in so far as it is impeded by carnal passions. There may be a perfect agreement in practice where there is yet a considerable difference in opinion and in the language in which opinions are expressed. Forbearance is peculiarly the duty of Christians in such circumstances, not to the injury

of the truth, of which we are not always the most competent guardians, but to the promotion of charity. We are creatures wholly dependent. Our dependence is on God, and not on man, nor on any view which the narrow intellect of man can take even of the truths which He has revealed. God will guard His own truth; and we shall best attain all salutary truth by cultivating that charity, which He requires. "The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God," James i. 20. Such contention is never defensible, even though truth be the pretext. It exasperates Christian feeling, and interrupts Christian unity. Men may be practically united though they differ in their conception of some important propositions, which all yet equally believe, and which all are yet equally willing to reduce to practice. This practical unity, resulting from the natural forbearance and charity of Christians, is all which we have a right to require or expect; and his zeal is not according to knowledge who demands a different result, and who endangers the unity which is possible for that which is utterly unattainable. They who meet together in the house of God

as brethren and as friends, who join in the same sacred services, and who partake in the same holy ordinances, are united by firmer ties and by more sacred sanctions than any formal agreement in the mere private interpretations of fallible men can furnish. For they thus unite in the sacred substance of all true religion; and thus continuing united, unless controversy and carnal passions unhappily intervene, they will not long differ, nor feel that they differ essentially, even in the import of the words by which their opinions are expressed.

Even the apostles had their occasional differences, and they were of some considerable importance. Such is the imperfection of man in all circumstances. This being acknowledged and inevitable, we are each required to yield for the sake of peace and unity, not essential truth, for ever that we have no power, but such peculiar notions and such party phrases as tend to interrupt the harmony which best becomes the Christian Church. We are not hereby required to yield up any truth, nor even the peculiarities with which such truth is associated in the minds. We are merely re-

required not to impose such peculiarities on those who are accustomed to a different phraseology and to different associations. We are required to have compassion one of another, to love as brethren, to be pitiful and courteous, with which the eager zeal of exclusive opinions, urged in angry controversy, is altogether incompatible. Men fall into these errors because they separate the principle of religion from the practice,—whereas they are in effect necessarily and inseparably united; the principle being essential to the practice and the practice to the principle. In effect, the practice which the system commands proves the truth of the principle on which it is founded; for it proves the mission of its Divine author, and exhibits the permanent influence of his Divine interposition. In the eager and exclusive adoption of the most sacred truths, we may mix up many corrupt affections and carnal passions; but if we are happily enabled to render those truths practical, to modify them, as the case requires, with the whole truths of the system, we shall thereby be enabled to correct those affections and to modify those passions. Religion consists in the

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cultivate the grace and to practise the charity which the doctrine in which we agree reveals, and which God is ever ready to bestow on all who yield themselves to his holy influence.

During the years, now not few, in which I have been connected with a colleague, I have never imposed, nor in any circumstances sought to impose, my peculiar opinions upon him, nor he upon me. I have never sought to impose my peculiarities even upon you, nor upon any the least enlightened person over whom I might have official or accidental influence. Indeed, no man in any circumstances has this right of imposition. Even truth, when it is imposed, and when it is adopted, as it is imposed, on mere human authority, will always be mixed up with human passions, and therefore, with all the sectarian attributes of error, which are the fruitful sources of much evil even among religious men whose zeal exceeds their knowledge while it suspends their charity. When, in the peculiar position in which I now stand, I come to consider the case of our collegiate connexion, not with any view to human approbation or blame, but with the more awful reference to God's judgment, I feel persuaded that any diffe-

Yet, in whatever place I may join in the sacred services of the Church to which we belong, I shall ever feel myself peculiarly associated with you, my first and my only ministerial charge, in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and, by God's blessing, on His own instituted means of grace, in righteousness of life. While I would hope, as I would earnestly desire, that I may continue to enjoy the charity of your prayers, that I may be enabled so to number the short remainder of my days, that I may seriously apply my heart to that holy and heavenly wisdom which may, in the end, bring me to life everlasting, through the merits of Him who is our only hope in life, our only support in the hour of death, and our only protector in the day of judgment.

In whatever locality we offer up our public prayers, we are not only associated as Christians under the same Divine Head, but we all speak the same thing; we unite in the same language,—in that sacred language of our admirable Liturgy, which is sanctioned at once, and sanctified by the authority of the most learned, and by the practice of the most pious.

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quite suggest those differences of application which our several circumstances, which our personal feelings, and which our particular wants require in other communities; the requirements and the qualities of the minister are of much more importance than they are in this department among us. Unity of expression in such circumstances is unattainable; though such unity of expression and such uniformity of doctrinal devotion as our language happily preserves, is of much more importance than in this age is generally imagined, in preventing divisions and in promoting the practical and the permanent influence of the truth as it is in Jesus.

As the case so clearly is in our devotions, so is it also in the general doctrines by which all our duties are regulated. We agree in these doctrines, for the clergy solemnly subscribe them, and the laity conscientiously adhere to them, because they are the doctrines of Scripture. We are, therefore, in the just sense of the apostle's injunction, perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment, if we continue united in the same communion and fellowship, if we are enabled to

men, from among the clergy and laity, who have ever adorned the Christian Church. Those holy men, to whom, under God, we owe the reformation of our Church, and the devotions by which she is distinguished, could leave us no better legacy than the Scriptures and the Liturgy in our vernacular tongue. The Scriptures contain the revelation, the evidence, and the history of true religion. The Liturgy adapts, as it is requisite, this divine revelation to the necessary purposes of practical religion, and of the devotion which is an essential part of our Christian profession. The Liturgy is to us the language of religion. This language is essentially practical: It is specially adapted to all the purposes of practical Christianity. All our Christian attainments are dependent on the grace of God. To obtain this grace, means are necessary. The Liturgy of our Church, commended to our hearts by the most sacred associations, presents to us those means of grace which God has graciously instituted for our salvation, in that plain and practical form which is equally adapted to all sorts and conditions of men. The Word of God is the best

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 of the Church, right

CADILLY.

—in the Articles,—and in the Homilies;—and that I never will, voluntarily or intentionally, swerve, in any case or circumstance, either in my general instructions to the Congregation, or in those more particularly addressed to the young, from the doctrine, discipline, and worship thus warranted by the highest authority.”

If I have been enabled, by God's blessing, in the course of my ministry, to fulfil, however imperfectly, this declaration, which was made, on my part, in the most perfect sincerity, I feel myself fully entitled, in the highest acceptation of the phrase, to the character of a Gospel Minister. That I have endeavoured to fulfil it with the same sincerity with which it was made, I feel; and that I have fulfilled it to the best of my ability, in the doctrine which I have uniformly taught, will be conceded, at least by those who are enabled to judge of my instructions,—not in the insulated form which all our instructions must, of necessity, take, when they are given, as they must be given, in detail, but in that systematic combination which is essential to the Gospel revelation,

by which one truth and one class of truths modify others, and give symmetry to the whole. This necessary modification and symmetry he will never discover who dwells exclusively on parts, and who gives to the part or parts which he selects, and on which he dotes, the high attributes which belong only to the whole, as the whole is completed and modified in that systematic combination which the Gospel indicates and requires, and which our Church has most admirably embodied and realized in the Liturgy, as the services are adapted to the course of her ecclesiastical year.

If I could certainly arrest your attention to that systematic knowledge of Scripture truth, and to those practical duties and devotions which the liturgic services arrange, embody, and present before us throughout the year, I should then leave you the best legacy which a Christian minister could or can leave to his Christian people. They are not *lifeless* forms, but *vital* principles of true religion, if we happily yield our hearts to that holy and heavenly influence which the Scriptures reveal, and which the services of the Church, rightly

celebrated by the special blessing and ordinance of God, impart to all who join in them with hearty repentance and true faith.

To the Word of God, then, as your best guide,—and to the Book of Common Prayer as your best companion,—permit me, in conclusion, earnestly to commend your Christian attention; while, in the fervent spirit of affectionate devotion, I repeat,—*Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind,—live in peace,—and the God of love and peace shall be with you.*

FINIS.

1829.

A CHARGE

DELIVERED TO THE

CLERGY OF THE ARCHDEACONRY OF SALOP,

IN THE

DIOCESE OF LICHFIELD AND COVENTRY,

AT THE VISITATION

IN JUNE, 1829.

BY

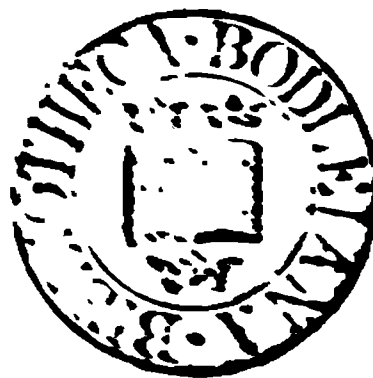
EDWARD BATHER, M. A.

ARCHDEACON OF SALOP.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

LONDON:

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1829.**



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TO
THE CLERGY
OF THE
ARCHDEACONRY OF SALOP,
THIS CHARGE,
PRINTED AT THEIR REQUEST,
IS INSCRIBED,
WITH MUCH RESPECT AND REGARD,
BY THE AUTHOR.

Meole Brace,
Sept. 4th, 1829.

A CHARGE.

MY REVEREND BRETHREN,

Though a considerable period has elapsed since the decease of my excellent predecessor, I should disappoint your just expectations, as well as expose myself to the charge of much ingratitude, if I commenced my first address to you in any other way than by acknowledging the great advantage which has accrued to me from having had such a man to follow. How much it was his care and study, in the discharge of his official duties, to give no offence in any thing, that the ministry should not be blamed—the urbanity of his general deportment, his uniform kindness, and his exemplary love of peace, are well known to all of you. But when it fell to my lot to be his successor, I was told

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A CHARGE.

REVEREND BRETHREN,

A considerable period has elapsed
since of my excellent predecessor,
I point your just expectations, and
myself to the charge of this
I commenced my first service
in a way than by acknowledging
the charge which has been laid on me
— such a man is called to be
careful and steady, in the discharge
of his duty, to give his whole heart
and strength to the service, and
to be ready to sacrifice his life
if necessary. I am, my brethren,
fully sensible of the weight of the
charge which has been laid on me,
and I am fully determined to
discharge it to the satisfaction of
all eyes.

that my duties would be greatly lightened in consequence of his previous services; and it would very ill become me, if I were not forward to declare that I have found this testimony true.

It was indeed his simple concern to *execute* the trust committed to him, not to obtain a reputation for ability or zeal. Whatsoever he had to do, it was his manner to go about it quietly and unostentatiously. The extent of his labours, therefore, was perhaps little known, and the usefulness of them may have been but inadequately appreciated. A most persevering, as well as a very judicious labourer, nevertheless, he was: and the fruits of his exertions have not been small. For that part of his office which called him to the inspection of the ecclesiastical buildings of the district under his care, he was eminently qualified by his peculiar tastes and studies; and he failed not to avail himself of this advantage. He had ascertained, by personal visitation, the precise state of every church within the archdeaconry: and though he had many obstacles to encounter—and though he was not a man who took delight in the exercise of authority, he had procured the substantial reparation of very many, which, by length of time, had become dilapidated, and the

restoration of others to decency and neatness, and to that degree of external good appearance, the neglect of which is so discreditable to those who allow of it, and so inconsistent with a just reverence of the sanctuary. It did not satisfy him, however, to have effected improvements, in various ways, himself. He was careful to lay a foundation for the benefit of any who should come after him. His documents, in my possession, not only constitute a most honourable monument to his own industry and fidelity in office; they are also a collection of facts so valuable, and so complete, as to leave, comparatively, little to be enquired into by his successor; whilst they cannot but afford the greatest light and assistance towards setting such things in order as may still be wanting.

I am well aware, therefore, that I am but entered into another man's labours, and that there is nothing better for me to do than to go on in the track which his care has so happily marked out for me. Before we meet again, I shall hope to have seen every church, and to have made the requisite examination into the state of the several parishes. When I shall have accomplished this, there may probably be some results which I shall consider it my duty to lay before you. But I must not ground any re-

marks upon a partial investigation. For the present, therefore, I shall proceed to request your attention to a few observations of a general nature.

My reverend brethren, I am not addressing myself to persons who are now to learn the importance of the work to which they have devoted themselves; or who are to seek, at this time of day, for the grounds upon which they may expect success in it. You are well assured that the office which you hold is of divine institution, and that, having yourselves been "lawfully called and sent to execute the same," you may look to Him who gave you your commission, to "be with you always," according to His own sure word of promise. You have also diligently examined and compared with holy scripture both the doctrines and the public ritual of the national church. You are verily persuaded that when our fathers put their hand to the work of reformation, they were "taught of God" to "ask for the old paths and to walk therein," and that having "proved all things," they held fast that only which is good. And you are therefore satisfied that, in order to the glorifying of God, and the edification of the people of your charge, you yourselves have no other course to take than to

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that there may be something upon which it is
reasonable to build a hope of good—in *any*

yet the church cannot stand by the orthodoxy of its formularies, unless also they be zealous and faithful men, whose part it is to teach the people in conformity to them. At all times, therefore, you will look well to yourselves, as conscious how much, under God, does at all times rest upon you : and, in the observation, which you cannot but take, of passing events, and of the state of public opinion, whether you should be able or not to come to any settled persuasion as to the final bearing which things are likely to have upon the church's interests ; yet, if the church seem to be, in any wise, concerned in them, you will at least be studious to enquire what conduct is peculiarly called for from those whom God has placed as watchmen upon her walls.

This is what I would suggest, and it is, in substance, all which I shall presume to suggest with particular reference to that act of the legislature which has awakened general anxiety so much of late. Certainly I do not hold myself to be called upon to discuss the merits of a public measure which has at length actually passed into law. I am not competent to predict the consequences ; nor will I on this occasion express my concurrence either with the anticipations of those who may take one view

of it, or with the alarms of those who may take another. But this I will say—if it were possible to put it out of our minds that such an act has passed, it would, on our parts, be most unwise to do so. For whether it be so that what has taken place *has brought*, or, when present effervescence shall have subsided, is likely *to bring* those of the Romish faith into a situation in which they may be apt to listen with less repugnance to what may be said for the confutation of their errors, and in which, as feeling less bound in honour to maintain their old opinions, they may be more assailable by fair argument, and more open to conviction—or whether, on the other hand, they have attained to a position in which they may better attack and injure *us*, and more effectually co-operate with any who may be seeking the overthrow of an establishment which cannot, as *we* are well assured, be weakened without a correspondent detriment to the cause of vital godliness—or whether there be misgivings on all sides, so that they who hope the most, must confess that there *are* respects in which even *they* are constrained to rejoice with trembling; whilst such as have feared the worst will admit that there may be something upon which it is reasonable to build a hope of good—in *any*

case, we *ourselves*, as ministers of the established church, are placed in new circumstances. Not a little will depend upon our conduct; and if there were nothing to be considered as peculiarly affecting us at this day *save* this single change, this alone would justify me in the assertion that there is a special call upon us for a peculiar measure of vigilance and exertion, and for deep consideration, and diligent and anxious supplication to be directed and taught of God.

But, indeed, our utmost zeal and circumspection are obviously demanded upon other grounds. To see this, we have but to consider the spirit and character of the age, and particularly the manner in which things established are now wont to be regarded. There have been times remarkable for a superstitious reverence of antiquity; and the ministers of religion have been looked up to with so implicit and blind a confidence, that there has been an almost general prostration of men's understandings to the dictation of their spiritual guides. There have perhaps been *better* times, when, with reference to the ministerial office, the people have remembered Uzza, who rashly laid his hand upon the ark of God; and when, at the same time, recognizing our predecessors as

a sacred order called of God, by an authority transmitted through the first apostles, to a sacred work, and charged by him with glad tidings of great joy, they have held them in *just and reasonable* veneration, and have “esteemed them very highly in love for their works’ sake.” But, however individual examples may not be wanting of a zeal humble and orderly, as well as fervent, this is not the general state of things at present. That the day of passive submission to men in spiritual office should, at least with the protestant part of the community, be over, is *well*; and if we be wise enough to dread temptation, as well as honest enough to desire to lead the people of our charge to nothing else but a reasonable service, none will be so ready to rejoice in it as ourselves. But *all* respect for antiquity and usage too generally is vanished also: and *all* claim of official character to deference seems now to be deemed exaction. The very fact that any thing is established and in possession which formerly was a presumption in its favour, is now an argument against it. We are fallen upon an age of experiment and innovation: for it is an age of superficial knowledge, in which though not many have learned to think, and but few have qualified themselves to judge,

vast multitudes have learned to talk, and the most are eager to distinguish themselves. The depth of research, and the habits of patient investigation, and the swiftness to hear which are so necessary to enable men to "prove all things," or to prove *any* thing upon which deliberation might worthily be employed, are out of date. History is not consulted; why things were ordered as they are, is not enquired into; whether objections which, upon a hasty survey of any subject, occur to our own minds were or were not anticipated, weighed and decided upon by our ancestors, is not considered. But it is easy to question and object. And though to let good things remain as they are is much beneath us, it is very agreeable to our self-complacency to dignify petulant attack by the name of free enquiry, and to call an ignorant and rash repudiation of things that be, emancipation from the trammels of ancient prejudice. It is easy to see that this spirit tends to the destruction of many a goodly fabric, for the loss of which mankind will be but ill-repaid by the hasty erection of new structures by builders who have been at no pains to study the principles, either of stability or beauty. And it is clear that whilst the Established Church has nothing to gain from these restless speculators,

it is already become one of the chief objects of their assaults. Why should any thing be established or prescribed at all? Or why is not every man who has zeal and gifts, as well entitled as any other to preach the gospel? And what need is there of any *sending* but a man's own willing mind? It is not that the conscientious dissenter from our communion is pleading for liberty of conscience, and holds himself to be in duty bound to separate from us after grave examination of the points in debate between our fathers and his own. I trust we know how to respect this character. But it is that all who, without study or enquiry, lean to their own understandings, are contending for the privilege of doing every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes.

Now there is indeed no need that we should be greatly terrified at this state of things. Neither shall we complain if it operates to augment the numbers of those who watch for our halting, that they may be able to accuse us before the people. It may be well for us that many eyes should be upon us, and that we should ourselves be sensible of it. And God's way of saving and supporting us may be by convincing us how little is to be expected from the sympathy or support of men. But, though

if we be true to God and to our brethren we want no aid, but God's alone; *if we be faithless, He* may make the spirit which is abroad the rod of his anger and the instrument of our overthrow. And this one thing is obvious to be remarked, and I think very important to be considered—that there never has been a period of our church in which, if I may so express myself, the clergy have been more cast upon their own resources than at present, or when it more behoved us to exemplify in our conduct the excellency and benefit of an established ministry, instead of looking to derive weight and importance to ourselves from the holding of our sacred office.

There are two or three things then which I would commend to your candid consideration. Not, my reverend brethren, as though I would take upon myself to instruct you, but as suggesting them to your own thoughts, to go further and better into them than I can do.

Combinations of men, you know, are powerful in action and impregnable in defence, not in proportion to the numbers associated, but to their consolidation by mutual confidence. “Jerusalem is builded as a city which is at unity in itself;” but, “a house divided against a house cannot stand.” Distrust and jealousy are

sources of weakness every way. The admittance of them into our own minds hurts ourselves; the manifestation of them irritates the minds of others; and if they subsist between fellow-labourers they injure the cause in which both parties are engaged, unfitting both for the prosecution of it, and giving occasion to its adversaries to triumph.

Then let us mark whatsoever causes division among us, and avoid it. We know that names of division have been too current in the church. Let them at least have no countenance from the clergy. It will be well when such terms as "*Evangelical*" and "*Orthodox*" shall cease altogether to be either assumed as distinctive appellations, or cast ironically and sarcastically upon others in a way of reproach. If, however, in contradiction to our wishes, the laity will persist in invidiously affixing these denominations, we must not take our measures of judgment from such a proceeding, or suspect or appreciate one another upon such authority. It is indeed no concern of ours to deny it, that into so large a body as the clergy of our church, even wicked men may have crept in unawares: that some may be less "apt and meek for their learning" than they ought to be; that some may prove slothful, and some precipitate, and

some in error. And if there be scandal we have no right to make excuses for it: and assuredly none of us must dare to compromise with respect to his own religious views. But when all this is, to the utmost extent, admitted, it is easier, and better, and juster far, to believe that "in many things we offend all," and all mistake, than to suppose either truth or honesty to be the exclusive possession of a party. We who preach "judge not, that ye be not judged," must not, either by our own rash judgments, or by adopting the hasty, and perhaps ignorant decisions of others, recognise a schism, or foster jealousies, or concur in irritating and thwarting, by expressions of contempt, men who may be very willing to learn and very desirous to do good, though they should not be every thing they ought to be at present, either in faith or practice. We, who are peacemakers by office, must have peace one with another; and must acknowledge ourselves to be above all things, concerned to put on towards each other that love which "covereth all *sins*;" which "hopeth, believeth, endureth all things."

And our way is very plain before us. What the church, to whose authority we have all subscribed, hath collected from Holy Scripture for doctrine, is exhibited in the Arti-

cles : the manner in which she will have the truth expounded, is exemplified in the Homilies. Let it be the grand concern of each of us, for *himself* to study *both* ; and in conformity to the instructions of the one, and in imitation of the tone and spirit of the other, let him “ give himself to the ministry of the word and to prayer.” Thus each, at the same time that he does his own proper work as he is commanded, will have done his part also, that all may “ be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment.” And if this course be taken generally, in things fundamental and essential, we shall be *all* evangelical and *all* orthodox. And besides this, “ *our moderation will be known unto all men.*” For we shall perceive not only what our church declares, but where her declarations stop. We shall mark, not only her decision in matters clear, and of vital moment ; but her caution in cases of dubious controversy.

- We shall observe that she gives no countenance to extreme statements on any side ; that indeed she has not taken upon herself to arbitrate in *every* difference, but has left some questions open. And what the church has tolerated we ourselves shall learn to tolerate : we shall treat with much lenity, at least, such dissent of our brethren from our own private views, as the

common standard to which we all appeal has not condemned: and we shall bear it in mind, that if, upon an abstruse and difficult question, there be an error of which our brother is tenacious, and which to us appears to lead to evil consequences, yet not only is it more excusable as occurring on such a question, but inasmuch as it is only a *particular* of his creed, which he holds *not singly*, but together with all those grand and unquestioned truths of the gospel which our church so unequivocally maintains; the poison, if there be any, has enough in his own scheme to neutralize it, the apprehended consequences may not, in fact, arise; men of indisputable piety have held the like before, and in spite of it he also may be, and perhaps he is, a practical and useful instructor in the way of godliness. These considerations I think imply no compromise, and make no concession to wilful ignorance and carelessness, but they tend *to peace*. And though in the present estate of man nothing may be able absolutely to prevent mutual misapprehensions, or to produce absolute unity of religious sentiment, yet, if what I have suggested were acted upon, so much would be done as would bring us into a better condition to sympathize with one another, and to help one another. There

would be no undue demands upon mutual forbearance, though of that excellent grace there would be a beneficial exercise; whilst, upon the whole, we should be a more *effective* as being a *better compacted* band of labourers; and this would be one great source of strength in a day in which whatsoever strength we have or can attain is needed.

These things having been considered respecting our conduct towards those within the pale of our own communion, a few suggestions will, perhaps, not be thought out of place, with reference to that which may befit us towards those who are without that pale.

And first:—It is not a *personal* question which is at issue between any of these parties and ourselves. Yet, when any of them come in contact with us, there is a spirit merely *selfish*, in which we may be tempted to regard them. Whilst this is the case, however, it will not be possible for us to act wisely. They must not be viewed merely as interfering with our importance or acceptance, or as drawing away our hearers. It is indeed an evil, and a serious one, if the proper pastor of a flock is, by any means, brought into unmerited disfavour with those to whom he is willing to do

good. But the evil does not consist in loss sustained by an individual, but in the detriment done to the cause of which he is the servant. And therefore, in the case before us, we must divest ourselves of all personal feeling as much as possible, and take care that we be not actuated in our conduct by mere private considerations. Whatsoever we do must be done upon public religious grounds, with a single eye to our master's honour, and to the welfare of his people under our care: And then we may hope that it will be done in that spirit *simply*, and in the use of those means *alone* which He has recognized, and which we may look to Him to bless.

It is obvious to remark, in the next place, that we shall inevitably do more harm than good, if our zeal for God be not according to knowledge, and we be not careful at every step to proceed upon accurate information.

Nothing is more calculated to injure and disgrace the church, than the hasty declamation of inexperienced persons who take up their views of the tenets of those who separate from her upon hearsay: and who consequently will, in all likelihood, misrepresent them. It is our bounden duty, therefore, (and present circum-

stances are not such as will warrant any relaxation of our zeal in the discharge of it,) by care and study, and from authentic sources, to acquaint ourselves with the true state of the questions which are at issue between our church and the members of other communions. We shall then know on what ground we stand, and be furnished, as we ought to be, to a good and necessary work. We shall know what it really is which we have to do to guard the people of our charge against delusion. And our exertions will not be a fight with shadows, or as the efforts of one that beateth the air. For certainly it is true, with respect to great bodies of dissenters, (and well it behoves us to praise God for it,) that they have no controversy with the chief doctrinal articles of our church; and that it is the honest end of their ministry to purify unto Christ a peculiar people zealous of good works. But it is true, also, that even with *these* we have differences of which we cannot conscientiously say that they are of trifling moment, and which therefore must not be compromised: whilst by *others* tenets are inculcated, of which nothing else can be justly thought, and of which therefore nothing less can honestly be said, than that they grossly

dishonour Almighty God, and greatly endanger the souls of men.

When due pains have been taken that we may understand these several parties, the right path in our conduct towards them lies, as is generally the case, between two evil extremes.

The wrath of man, it is most certain, can never work the righteousness of God. Unfair exaggeration and undue vehemence will always recoil upon the heads of those who are so weak as to have recourse to them; and personal jealousy and animosity, it has been said already, are absolutely out of place. But we must not be deterred from duty through fear of having any of these degrading things imputed to us; nor must we allow ourselves to be misled by popular abuse of terms. Candour and liberality, of which we hear not a little now, are good things no doubt. But the counterfeits which assume their names, are to be met with much more commonly than themselves, and are very *bad* things. We must not covet the shining counterfeit, and disregard the sterling gold. We must not purchase the name of liberality by foregoing the defence of truth. If we do we shall be as sure to *obtain* the contempt of those whom we would conciliate by undue compli-

ances, as we shall be to *deserve* the contempt of *all* men. One of the solemn vows which is upon us is, "that we will be ready, with all faithful diligence, to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's word: and we must endeavour to keep our vow, the Lord being our helper." It does not pledge us to assume a controversial manner in the pulpit, or to spend that time in denouncing the absent as misbelievers, which should be spent in instructing and exhorting our own congregations. But it does pledge us to "speak the truth in love," to be ready always to show that our own church has scripture on her side, and to take heed that we no more *understate* than *overstate* the importance of the differences between her and others. If the fundamental doctrines of the gospel are denied or explained away, and we know it, there is a peculiar call upon us, on this account, to be more diligent in plainly laying down the truth, to be more express in proving it by explicit testimonies of scripture, and in demonstrating its practical importance. And it is our duty, too, to affirm, in all fit places, and upon all fit occasions, our conviction that the alleged grounds of separation from our church are insufficient to justify

the seceders. It is our duty to be able and ready to show that the formularies of our church have nothing unlawful or antichristian in them, and that they have been lawfully prescribed. It does behove us to discountenance the notion, that any man is at liberty, without recognition of public ecclesiastical authority, to take upon himself the office of ministering in the congregation: if those of our own flocks will “heap unto themselves teachers, after their own lusts, having itching ears,” such a zeal must not have our implied commendation; and if separatists will say unto us, “cast in your lot among us,” when we are *not* verily persuaded in our own minds that our co-operation *can* be without compromise, the praise of candour must be foregone, and the charge of bigotry must be endured. But, on the other hand, we must approve things that are excellent in *all* men. Not in self-seeking affectation, but in simplicity and godly sincerity, we must joyfully recognize and duly honour the indisputable piety and honest zeal of those who differ from us. And I must add, if there be works of beneficence and godliness—as surely there are *some*—which we can prosecute in common with them, *without* the surrender of any principle, we may very well

rejoice in it ; and if in any particular instance, and after reasonable care in inquiry, the case, to our own minds, be *clear*, it is little to us how it may be viewed by others. Here, also, misconstruction must be borne, that integrity may not be sacrificed. We are not called upon to judge other men's decisions, but assuredly it does behove us to act upon our own.

I think that by such a course as this, we shall satisfy the claims both of Christian charity and of ministerial faithfulness. And if so, we shall offend no reasonable persons, and incur no just suspicions ; but shall so act as to adorn our profession, and to make our *cause*, as well as ourselves respected.

But, my reverend brethren, the one thing indispensable is this,—that each of us, as accountable to almighty God, should *take heed unto himself* that he be a man honestly *devoted to his work*. If this be our character as a body, nothing can shake us : if this be forgotten, nothing can save us. It is not by learning, or even by sound religious views—it is not by mere prudence and discretion in our intercourse with men around us, or even by unanimity among ourselves—it is not by skill in theological discussion, or by churchmanship—it is

not by any of these, however each of them be necessary, nor is it by all of them put together, that the church is to be supported; but by practical faith, and solid piety; by purity of intention, and true love to the souls of men. If it be upon worldly principles, upon state considerations, with self-interested designs of any sort, that men would have things established to *abide*, and if they intrust the defence of them to methods of worldly policy, they have “cast fire into the sanctuary, and defiled the dwelling-place of God’s name to the ground.” But if believing of our church that *God* brought her up out of the land of spiritual bondage, and taught her “the truth as it is in Jesus,” and set her feet upon a rock, and ordered her goings; and then placed her beautiful crown upon her head, and ordained her to be a light of the world, holding forth the word of life, we will be her willing servants to keep her lamp burning to this one intent; and if we value her sincerely because she is so excellently constituted, and so well adapted to be an instrument for this high purpose, then is the church alive in her living sons, “God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved—the Lord will help her, and that right early.” Nor is this the less sure

because it may be said that the stability of our outward polity depends much upon the state of the public mind respecting us. Secondly, and in the ordinary course of things, no doubt it is so. But this, also, we know is in the hand of God, to turn it as he sees good. And though there be at this day many adversaries, and attack upon existing establishments be popular ; yet there is always that left in the hearts of men, to which manifest integrity may make a safe appeal. I know that godliness is traduced and hated by ungodly people. And there are scorers to whom every form of religion exhibits itself as priestcraft. Yet as far as our support depends on public opinion, our road to it is by acting up to the full extent of our acknowledged principles. If we will but apply ourselves wholly to that one thing to which we stand engaged, and draw all our cares and studies that way, there will be a witness for us in the hearts of those into whose souls we have poured light and consolation—there will be a witness for us in the hearts of those among whom we have gone about doing good—there will be a witness for us in those men's consciences who observe the effects of our ministrations upon public morals—there will be a witness for us in

the minds of pious men of every name, telling them, that in that which is of infinite and eternal interest, our cause and theirs is one. And we shall put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, and make hasty men ashamed of their rash judgments, and prudent men will stand with us for their own sakes, and good men for the love and fear of God.

THE END.

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1827
THE WARNING VOICE,
OR
AN AWAKENING QUESTION

FOR ALL
BRITISH PROTESTANTS IN GENERAL
AND MEMBERS OF THE
CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN PARTICULAR,
AT THE PRESENT JUNCTURE:

BEING THE
SUBSTANCE OF A LATE DISCOURSE
FROM THE PULPIT.

BY THE
REV. RICHARD BINGHAM, JUN., M.A.
CURATE OF GOSPORT CHAPEL.

Haud tanto cessabit cardine rerum.

LONDON:
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1829.



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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Author having been strongly urged to publish the Discourse referred to in the title-page, has complied with the suggestion, in an humble hope that by so doing he may help in some degree to stem the torrent which already is swollen to an alarming height, and threatens us with an awful desolation. He has taken the opportunity which the press affords, for considerably enlarging and generally improving the original Discourse; to which he has added a few illustrative notes and authorities; while the whole has been strengthened by much new matter, and now assumes the character of an Oration, or Congregational Address: in which light the Author begs it may be regarded, although

it somewhat retains the features of a composition for the pulpit.

TO

ALL FAITHFUL SUPPORTERS OF THE
CONSTITUTION IN CHURCH AND STATE,
TO THE CHAMPIONS OF PROTESTANTISM
AND THE SACRED PRINCIPLES
OF THE EVER-BLESSED REFORMATION,
AND TO EVERY REAL
FRIEND OF TRUE RELIGIOUS LIBERTY
AND THE RIGHT OF PRIVATE JUDGMENT
IN MATTERS OF FAITH,
IS THE FOLLOWING ORATION
RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,
BY THEIR FRIEND AND SERVANT,
THE AUTHOR.

Gosport, Feb. 25, 1829.

THE WARNING VOICE, . . .

&c. &c.

2 KINGS ix. 32.

“ Who is on my side ? Who ? ”

It has occurred to me that I could not do better than defer the usual lecture for this evening*, and seize the opportunity, which is thus afforded me in the providence of God, for calling the earnest attention of my hearers to some important topics connected with the present aspect of affairs, and in direct reference to the cause of our common Christianity in general, and the Church of England in particular ; and, accordingly, I stand forth this day as a sincere though humble champion of Divine Revelation and the Truth as it is in Christ Jesus : I stand forth to defend the principles of our forefathers, whose memory is blessed,—the principles of the ever-glorious Re-

* The author generally preaches on successive portions of the Book of Genesis, on the evenings of the first, third, and fourth Sundays of the month.

formation from the errors of Popery,—principles for which so many worthies were faithful even unto death, and sealed their testimony with their blood ;—the principles of the British Constitution, the pride of Europe, the envy of the world ; founded as it is on the unimpeachable basis of right reason, uncompromising integrity, and Scriptural authority. My only desire, believe me, is to labour for the promotion of Truth, the real interests of our Church, the good cause of the Protestant Faith, and the glory of our God and Saviour in all things.

Gracious God, look down with mercy on thy unworthy servant ; bless his feeble efforts on this occasion ; enlighten, guide, and uphold him : and cause this subject to be brought in demonstration of thy Spirit and with power to the minds and understandings, to the hearts and consciences, of these thy people ! Grant this for the sake of Christ Jesus, our Mediator and Redeemer.

I. With regard, however, to the ORIGINAL OCCASION of the words I have selected for the Text, I need not detain you with any lengthened explanation. You, my brethren, are probably no strangers to the history which is developed in the context : and sufficient will it be briefly to remind you, that Jehu was an instrument in the hand of God for executing his righteous judgments on an idolatrous and persecuting family.

Having received his appointment to the throne of Israel, and at the same time his authority for the destruction of Ahab's wicked race, through the ministry of the prophet Elisha, he hastens away from the camp at Ramoth-Gilead, and soon arrives at Jezreel, where Joram, the devoted king, the impious son of Ahab, lay sick of his wounds. He speedily executes the retribution which God had sanctioned; and, having cast his body to the dogs, on the very spot which was once the vineyard of the murdered Naboth, drives into the city and approaches the palace of the king. It was then that the shameless woman Jezebel, the queen-mother, having "painted her face and tired her head," looked out at a window, and, meaning to daunt him by an indirect threat, exclaimed, "Had Zimri peace, who slew his master?*" Jehu makes no reply to this worthless woman, but, lifting up his face to the window, exclaims aloud, "WHO IS ON MY SIDE? WHO?" and finding that there were those at hand, who were prepared to execute his purpose, he bids them throw her down. Instantly is she dashed to the earth, and trampled to death under the hoofs of his horses and the wheels of his chariot;

* Zimri slew Elah, with all the family of Baasha, and usurped the throne of Israel. He reigned but for a short time, and soon came to a miserable end, by burning his palace over his own head, when threatened by Omri and his party. See 1 Kings xvi. 8—20.

her blood being sprinkled on the trappings of the steeds and on the wall of the palace :—an awful emblem of Divine retribution, and an impressive illustration of the sentence, “ Whosoever sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed.”

I shall detain you no longer on this part of the subject than just to observe, that the woman Jezebel, who was not only an adulteress and idolatress*, but also inveterately persecuted the prophets of the Lord and contrived the murder of Naboth†, may be regarded as emblematical of an idolatrous and persecuting Church in her *character* and *conduct*; while her *miserable end* foreshadowed the overwhelming retribution with which every idolatrous and persecuting church will eventually be visited. Perhaps the woman Jezebel is the first Old-Testament type we have of the Romish Church, in her *blood-thirsty spirit*, *blood-stained career*, and *bloody doom* in the fulfilment of those words; “ Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art and wast and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus: for *they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink*: for they are worthy.” Rev. xvi. 5, 6.

In corroboration of these remarks on the *typical* character of Jezebel, we may allege the words of

* See 2 Kings ix. 22.

† See 1 Kings xviii. 13; xix. 2; xxi. 5—10.

our Lord, in his Epistle to the Church of Thyatira by the hand of the Apocalyptic Divine. After highly commending this church, the Lord adds, “Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel” (*false doctrine of an Antinomian complexion*), “which calleth herself a prophetess” (*pretending to divine authority*), “to teach, and to seduce my servants to commit fornication” (*spiritual uncleanness, with a licence to indulge in sensual criminality*), “and to eat things sacrificed unto idols” (*to receive error as wholesome food, and to mingle without restraint in the pleasures of the world and the pollutions of the flesh*). “And I gave her space to repent of her fornication, and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and those that commit adultery with her” (*unite in her spiritual impurity, or become partakers of her guilt by conniving at or becoming accessory to her abominations*), “into great tribulation” (*the doom of every idolatrous and persecuting church*), “except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death” (*civil and ecclesiastical extinction*), “and all the churches” (*Protestant and Reformed*) “shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts : and I will give unto every one of you according to his works.” Rev. ii. 20—23.

This quotation is sufficient for the proof of the former assertion, that the woman Jezebel is a *typical* character, and may possibly be regarded

as an Old-Testament emblem of “BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH:” and especially considering that the mystical Babylon (*the Papacy*) is also, in the xviith and xviiith chapters of the same book of Scripture, frequently charged with *fornication* and *adultery*, with *persecution* and *blood-shedding*, which were the capital sins of Jezebel of old. Compare verses 1, 2, and 6, of chap. xvii., and 3, 9, and 24, of chap. xviii.

II. I am thus, however, reminded of the PARTICULAR USE AND APPLICATION I propose making of the words of Jehu; which is, indeed, the chief object of the present address: and accordingly, detaching the exclamation, “WHO IS ON MY SIDE? WHO?” altogether from the context, I would now regard it as a WARNING VOICE; AN AWAKENING QUESTION FOR ALL BRITISH PROTESTANTS IN GENERAL, AND EVERY MEMBER OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN PARTICULAR, AT THE PRESENT CRITICAL JUNCTURE.

1. Observe, my brethren, and mark well my words;—I say, “ALL BRITISH PROTESTANTS IN GENERAL.” And why? Because the best interests of Protestantism must be endangered in proportion as Papal influence prevails. The Romish Church is the irreconcilable enemy of Protest-

antism, which she dreads as a powerful rival, and anathematizes as schism and heresy—crimes in her estimation of a dye far deeper than adultery, incest, and murder.

And here, by the way, I cannot but express my surprize that the Socinians have suffered their inveterate hatred for the Church of England so far to get the better of their common sense, as to induce them to strain every nerve in helping Popery into power. Surely, if they would give themselves a moment to reflect, they would soon be convinced, that, if ever Rome obtains ascendancy in these Protestant realms, she will lose no time in crushing the spawn of the viper's egg, and will speedily sweep away a system which admits of neither angel nor devil, to say the least of it; and which is consequently odious, above all, to those who adore saints and angels without number, and enthrone the Virgin Mary at the right hand of God!*

* The rituals of the Romish Church afford ample specimens of her saint-worship. "The Litany of our Blessed Lady of Loretto," for instance, runs in the following style:—Anthem: "We fly to thy patronage, O sacred Mother of God! Despise not our prayers in our necessities, but deliver us from all dangers, O ever glorious and blessed Virgin." And then, after invoking the sacred Persons of the Trinity, it continues, "Holy Mary, pray for us! Holy Mother of God, pray for us! Seat of Wisdom! Gate of Heaven! Burning Star! Help of Christians!" &c. (in all, forty-four attributes) "pray for us!"

Specimens, if possible, more gross than the above, may be found in "the Litany of the Blessed Virgin" for Saturday

I am sorry that any of our Dissenting brethren among the Baptists and Independents, of whom I would speak with the utmost respect and tenderness, inasmuch as they hold with us the cardinal points of revealed truth ; with whom we have fellowship in the communion of saints ; and an innumerable company of whom we shall undoubtedly meet in a world of glory, through the blood and righteousness of Jesus, the common founda-

evening ; wherein she is addressed as “ reigning for ever Queen of saints and angels ;” as “ residing for ever Advocate of the penitent and afflicted.” While the “ Son of the Blessed Virgin ” is supplicated “ to *hear his mother’s intercession* ” for the worshippers. In another place, the following prayer is made. “ O blessed Spirits of heaven ! pray for me : and especially thou, O holy Angel, the guardian of my soul and body, vouchsafe to continue thy care over me. O all ye blessed Saints of God, who, having passed through the troubles and vexations of your terrestrial state of exile, are for ever placed in your celestial country, I most humbly beg your protection, and the favourable acceptance of your prayers in my favour, now and at the hour of death ! ”—See also “ The Litany of the Saints and Angels,” and “ The Litany of the Sick ;” where Abraham, John the Baptist, Peter and the Apostles, St. Stephen, St. Lawrence, St. Bennet, &c., &c. and *all the holy monks and hermits*, are addressed as mediators, and entreated to *pray for the sick person* !—The whole of the above illustrations of Romish idolatry, with a thousand other proofs, may be found in “ The Manual of Prayers, and other Christian Devotions, &c., as enlarged by the Venerable and Right Reverend Dr. Richard Challoner, Bishop of Debra, and Vicar Apostolic.” Printed and published in 1802, by Keating, Brown, and Co., 37 Duke Street, Grosvenor Square, London.

☛ It is a well-known fact that Dr. Challoner’s books are of high authority among Roman Catholics in this country.

tion of our eternal hopes;—I am sorry, I say, that *they* should have ever suffered political feelings so far to overcome them, as to cause them to combine with the God-denying apostasy in the followers of Socinus, and make common cause with Infidels, in promoting what has been long falsely termed CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION*; the greatest misnomer in the English language; and which, I am bold to assert, would eventually prove, to the ineffable sorrow and misery of thousands, to be in effect, and to all intents and purposes, nothing less than absolute PROTESTANT SLAVERY! Should such ever be the case, the mistake of our Dissenting brethren would undoubtedly recoil on their

* The following statement from Mr. Grant's Summary Account of the Church of England (vol. III. pp. 98, 99) will serve to remind our Dissenting friends how inconsistently *they* are acting with the old principles of the Nonconformists.

“James still continued courting the Nonconformists to concur with him in abolishing the penal laws and test. On the other hand, with the same view of introducing Popery, he was holding correspondence with the Apostolic chair. But Innocent continued to disapprove of his wild measures, and only sent a nuncio into England, who appointed four vicars-apostolical and dispersed a few pastoral letters. Although to correspond with the Pope had been made treason by Act of Parliament, James gave this nuncio a public reception at Windsor. While he thus in various ways exposed the hollowness of his professed liberality, Baxter, and others of the more sensible Nonconformists, desirous as they were of the free exercise of their religion, apprehended the consequences of admitting Papists to the same privilege, and agreed that the King had no right to dispense with penal statutes by his simple prerogative.”

own heads *. What then are they doing, while helping the Romanists into power, but nourishing a scorpion in their bosoms, which will presently repay them for warming it into life with the grateful acknowledgment of a mortal sting? To change the metaphor, what are they doing but forging new shackles for their own limbs, whetting the axe for the excision of their churches, and fanning that flame which shall once more set Great Britain in a blaze?

2. I have also said, "EVERY MEMBER OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN PARTICULAR." And is there not ground for such an appeal? Has not

* It may not be out of place to introduce an extract from a review of "Llorente's History of the Inquisition" which appeared in the Christian Observer for March 1827, and which will in some degree illustrate the idea that Popery might presently make use of any accession of power in the destruction of those very individuals by whose influence and instrumentality she was helped to the recovery of her sway.—

"Though the Inquisition would not spare the *learned*, who might be denominated its *natural* enemies, it may be supposed, perhaps, that it was likely to shew more respect and reverence for the *great*. But it happened in this instance, as in many others, that those who had originally the power of controlling its operations did not perceive their mistake *till they had nursed a monster too vigorous and refractory to be governed, and were deservedly punished by their ultimate subjection to the work of their own hands*. 'Ferdinand and his successors,' we are informed, 'had granted privileges to this tribunal which the encroachments of the Inquisitors soon rendered insupportable.' A *supreme* council had indeed been erected by the government, as some check upon its proceedings; but this check proved, for the most part, merely nominal."

the Church of England been raised up in the good providence of God as an eminent standard to the nations ; a sacred depository of the vital principles of pure Christian doctrine ; and a bulwark, founded on the Rock of Ages, against Papal tyranny over the minds and consciences of men ? Has not the Church of England, with all her faults, if faults she has, well deserved the best thanks of thousands who dissent from her communion ? Has she not spread abroad her shadowing wings, under which all denominations and persuasions have been protected from injury and wrong, and have enjoyed their private sentiments and peculiar tenets unmolested and unshackled ? Is she not the sacred shrine of the rights of man, where religious liberty has sat for centuries enthroned ? But put her for one short season in the power of that tyrannical step-mother whose yoke she hath broken from off her neck, and immediately she is bound with grinding fetters, while her princes and her priests and her people will go into captivity together.

3. I would add, that the Text is an awakening question for you, my beloved brethren, INDIVIDUALLY. Now is the crisis come. *Your* rights as the rational and intellectual creatures of God, —*your* national prerogatives as members of the British Constitution, —*your* religious liberties as the sons and daughters of a Reformed Church, — I had almost said *your* families and homes, *your*

property and persons, are at stake ! Listen, then, to the Warning Voice which speaks to you from above. Give heed to the Awakening Question which the Great Head of the Church, the Bishop of bishops, the Lord of lords, the Ruler of the princes of the earth, at this time seems to ask you ! Hear Him calling aloud to you, “ WHO IS ON MY SIDE ? WHO ? ” Behold Him, as it were, looking down from heaven upon this so-often-favoured country, to see if there be any that will understand ; to see if he can find a man among us that will say, “ Here am I ; send me ! I am on the Lord’s side : and may I be faithful in his cause ! ” Picture Him as wondering that there is no intercessor, and then interposing his own power, and ready with his own arm to assert the cause of his Church and withstand the fury of the oppressor. Think of Him as saying to the troubled waters of political and religious confusion, “ Peace, be still ! ” See him confining the torrent-floods of ungodliness to their prescribed place, and saying to the rising tide of popular commotion, “ Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further ; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed ! ”

But, brethren, though the Lord Omnipotent, reigning on his imperishable throne, is prepared to stretch out his arm, almighty to save, for the upholding of his people, He willeth not that *we* should stand neuter, undecided, and inactive.

He calls upon us to come forth boldly to the help of the Lord,—to the help of the Lord against the mighty ; and to answer without hesitation or reservation the appeal he makes in the language of the Text, “ WHO IS ON MY SIDE ? WHO ? ”

And who then, would I say, is on the side of the King and Constitution of these realms,—Protestant as the former hath solemnly sworn to be in the executive, and Protestant as the latter essentially is in the principles of the legislative, as well as in the doctrines and discipline of the ecclesiastical ? Who is on the side of the Reformed Church of England,—Protestant as she professes to be, and proclaims it aloud in her Articles, Homilies, and Common Prayer ? Who is on the side of the Truth as it is in Christ Jesus,—on the side of pure and undefiled religion,—of our common Christianity,—in a word, **THE BIBLE ?**

Let all such come forth. Let them stand out and avow their principles aloud. Let them say whose they are, and whom they serve. Let them contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. Let them beware of a false shew of liberality, with irreligion and infidelity under the mask. Let them watch against Deism defiling our schools of philosophy, Materialism infecting our colleges of surgery and medicine, and Socinianism already breathing her pestilential influence and corrupting

the atmosphere of the London University. Let them be on their guard against the prevalence of loose principles in lawyers and statesmen and legislators, as well as false doctrine and Romish tenets in divines. Let them resist the innovating spirit of the age; oppose the no-longer-disguised aggressions of Popery; and maintain inviolate, as they have received it from their forefathers unimpaired, the PROTESTANT INTEREST in these dominions!

III. Having brought the subject thus far, it will now be time to dispatch TWO OR THREE IMPORTANT POINTS, which seem naturally to present themselves: and

1st, With regard to the NECESSITY which exists for asking this question.

Is there not a cause? Consider how latitudinarian in their tendency are the favourite principles of the day. That all religions are alike, is the doctrine of people in general. The old landmarks, which the wisdom of our forefathers placed, are one after another removed as useless lumber; and presently all distinguishing tenets and articles of faith and confessions of churches will be voted out as obsolete, and altogether incompatible with the rapid march of modern intellect. We see also the insidious poison of infidel sentiments infused into the writings of authors in prose or verse, who might otherwise have deserved our best

encomiums. We trace in the official dispatches of the servants of the Crown, and in documents emanating from the Cabinet, an evident unwillingness to acknowledge the superintending providence of God in the disposition of political events and the directions of a nation's counsels. We behold with sorrow the desecration of the Sabbath by thousands of all classes ; while those who should set a better example are found taking an unblushing lead in openly violating one of the most prominent injunctions of the Bible*. How awful is the fact, that many, now moving in the highest circles of power and influence, are constantly in the habit of choosing that holy day for their most fashionable and sumptuous entertainments ! We discover, moreover, an awful looseness of principle and dereliction of duty in men occupying the highest posts in the legislature or executive. We see them recalling their own words and recanting the very sentiments they but lately most eagerly supported ; while they confess their real convictions as to the side where truth lies, by alleging *expediency* as the best reason for a directly opposite course. Thus they distrust that Being who has armed them with power to maintain the truth : and they do indeed bear the sword in vain ; for they are afraid to wield it, though in a

* "The Speaker of the House of Commons gave his first parliamentary dinner this session on Saturday, and his second on the Lord's day following."—*Record Newspaper*.

. righteous cause; while they are prepared to sacrifice principle to expediency; and, immolating candour, justice, and integrity on the altar of worldly policy, would offer them up as propitiatory gifts before the shrine of Popular Applause! We have witnessed with shame and sorrow the compromising spirit of our recent administrations. We have blushed to see the laurels of Britain tarnished, while her soldiers have been employed not only in attending the solemn mockery of pontifical high mass in Roman-Catholic cathedrals; but even in assisting the idolatrous ceremony, by presenting arms and lowering the standard of this realm at the elevation of the Host! and have felt a generous disdain at the unseemly sight of field-officers of the British army vying with each other in supporting a pompous canopy over the dried mummy of St. Spiridione*—if I may be permitted the expression, the tutelary deity of Corfu!—Neither is this all. We have trembled at our identification with Popery in the permission of

* I might also have said, had it not sounded almost too ridiculous for the body of the discourse, "*and over the thumb of St. Caro Lambo!*" This precious relict, which is said to have escaped the flames at the burning of the now-sainted Caro Lambo, is annually carried with great pomp and solemnity to the sea-side, and then dipt into the water, in order to prevent the plague from crossing over from the continent to the island (Corfu). The British troops attend the ceremony, and at the awful moment of dipping poor Caro's thumb the British guard of honour present arms, and a royal salute is fired by the British Artillery!!—Proh pudor!

a Jesuit's college to exist in this kingdom, and the allowance of the annual grant out of the revenues of the empire of ten thousand pounds per annum to the Roman-Catholic college at Maynooth! Over and above all this, as the crowning sin of Protestant England, we stand appalled at the disposition, not only to remove civil disabilities from members of the Romish persuasion, but, as it were, the resolute *determination* of the ministers of state to admit them positively into Parliament!! AND IS THERE NOT A CAUSE? Who cannot but speak—aye, and *speak out*,—in such days as these? Is it not *necessary*, is it not an *imperious duty*, to cry aloud and spare not? Is it not high time to ask “*Who is on my side? Who?*”

2. The PROPRIETY, however, of starting this question, especially in this place, will also claim a few remarks.

Some are doubtless prepared to ask me, whether *the pulpit* is the proper sphere for politics. I answer, No; IT IS NOT THE PLACE FOR POLITICS. A political priest is a discredit to the ministry of the Gospel; and were this a question of taxation, or of some other temporal business, I would be the last man in the church to desecrate the holy spot by bringing such a topic forward. But, brethren, I maintain that this *is not merely a political question*: it is of an *ecclesiastical* character; and it affects the best interests of *religion* and the

Gospel of Christ far too deeply for any faithful servant of the Lord to keep silence. I assert, that the ministers of Christ are the appointed watchers for the truth, and the authorized guardians of religion. They are often raised up for eminent usefulness in perilous times. If *they* do not stand in the gap, their Master will upbraid them for their cowardice, and charge them with a dereliction of duty*. They are called upon to stem the torrent of irreligion, and in the name of the Lord to set up a banner against the enemy coming in like a flood. They ought to occupy an elevated station on the towers of the fenced city, ever going their unceasing rounds on the bulwarks of our Zion; and, considering that the New Testament terms them “ambassadors for Christ,” and declares that they are in “Christ’s stead” in addressing the people†, we shall scarcely be charged with arrogating an office which does not belong to us, if we look upon ourselves as much in the situation of Israel’s prophets of old. Read, then, the authority for the ground I am taking in the following words: “Son of Man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman; if, when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet and

* See Ezek. xv. 5, and xxii. 30.

† See 1 Cor. v. 20.

warn the people, then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning, if the sword come and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head : he heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning ; his blood shall be upon him : but *he that taketh warning* shall deliver his soul. But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned ; if the sword come and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity ; but *his blood will I require at the watchman's hand !*" (Ezek. xxxiii. 2—6.) If, then, we be deeply alive to the awful responsibility of our office, we shall be actively engaged in lifting up like a trumpet the Warning Voice : we shall not forget the Lord's command by the hand of his servant Joel,—“ Blow the trumpet in Zion, sound an alarm in my holy mountain ; let the people tremble.” Neither, discharging this duty, shall we forget another equally imperative, which is that of humiliation and prayer, in earnest intercession with God ; while we set an example of devotion in spirit as well as of decision in character, and endeavour to act up to the intention of that solemn call to fasting, and mourning, and supplication,—“ Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar ; and let them say, Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the

heathen should rule over them : wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God ? ” (Joel ii. 17.)

3. A few remarks, however, are yet to be made on the UTILITY of agitating this question.

My hearers, I confess I deem it *highly useful*, with the view of awakening an interest and *rousing* your attention. Yes, I repeat the term ; we need to be ROUSED from our lethargy. We have all been slumbering too long at our several posts : let us awake ere it be too late, and arise while the foe is yet only advancing. The sluggard’s disposition for “ a little more sleep and a little more slumber, a little more folding of the arms to sleep,” may irreparably ruin the best of causes. It will be useful, then, to consider in due season how great may be the impending danger ; how invaluable are the jewels we may lose ; how awful is the crisis at which we are now arrived. The consideration of the subject will also have its uses in preparing you for encountering innumerable artifices. You will not so easily be deceived by plausible tales and fair speeches ; you will not *be reasoned out of reason*, till you become the dupes of that audacious lie, that *Popery is no longer Popery !* —that the Romish religion is modified and ameliorated ! You will thus be led to a recollection of a mass of incontrovertible evidence, that the principles of Rome are ever and unalterably the

same * ; and that, claiming one Divine attribute in

* Let the evidence of the following extract from the Speech of the Rev. Mr. Townsend, at a late meeting at Northallerton, and published in the Yorkshire Gazette for Jan. 31, be duly considered. The proposition is, that Popery is ever in its spirit and its principles the same. Now mark some few illustrations out of a mass of evidence.

Principles professed by the See of Rome from 1808 to 1820, extracted from the Circular Letters and Briefs of Pope Pius VII. Chiaramonte.

1. That the Pope is the Vicegerent of God, who disposes of thrones, and is the Sovereign of sovereigns.—*Letter addressed to the Foreign Ministers resident at Rome, and signed Cardinal Pacca. Nov. 30, 1808.*

2. That any state declaring itself independent of the Church, is in a state of schism.—*Circular Letter, Feb. 5, 1808.*

3. That the dependence of the Episcopal order on the See of Rome is necessary to the unity of the church.—*Ibid.*

4. That no lay authority can translate from one bishopric to another.—*Circular Letter from Savona, Dec. 2, 1810.*

5. That there is no hope of salvation out of the Church of Rome.—*Instructions to the Subjects of the Holy See, signed Gabrielli, May, 22, 1808.*

6. Protest by the Holy See against the public toleration of other modes of worship.—*Instructions, &c. ut supra, and Circular Letter to all Cardinals, &c. Feb. 5, 1808.*

7. Power of the Pope to regulate oaths of allegiance, and to determine how far they may be taken passively or actively, provided they are never to be prejudicial to the church.—*Instructions, ut supra, and Letter addressed to the Cardinals of the Papal Territory. Aug. 30, 1809.*

8. His condemnation of all marriages with heretics, as matters of detestation and abhorrence.—*Circular to the Cardinals, Archbishops, Bishops, and Capitular-Vicars of France, dated Rome, Feb. 27, 1809.*

9. Power delegated to Archbishops and Bishops of France to grant absolution, indulgences, and give dispensations on mar-

asserting the *infallibility* of the church, she in

riages, *licences* in cases of *incest* or *adultery*, provided neither party has been instrumental in the death of the deceased husband.—*Indulgences*, Feb. 27, 1809, signed Cardinal Michael di Pietro.

10. Obligation to preserve and promote the establishment of religious orders, and their active restoration.—*Circular Letter to Cardinals*, Feb. 5, 1808; and *Papal Bull*, Rome, Aug. 15, 1814.

Special restoration of the Jesuits in Russia, (*Brief*, March 7, 1801.) In Sicily, (*July* 30, 1804.) General restoration, (*Aug.* 7, 1814.) Conditionally in *England*.—*See Letter of Card. Gonsalvi*. April 18, 1820.

“Such,” continues Mr. Townsend, “are the modern principles of this church; and if other testimony were wanting, I might refer to some of the most popular writers of its communion. Bossuet *boasted* that the Church of Rome was intolerant. He declared the Church of Rome to be the most intolerant of all Christian sects; that it is her holy and inflexible incompatibility which renders her severe, unconciliatory, and odious to all sects separated from her. They desire to be tolerated, but her holy severity forbids such indulgence!—Dr. Walmaley, the author of ‘Pastorini’s Prophecies,’ assures us, that ‘the Church of Rome is always uniform, and unanimous in her doctrine; that the solemn determinations of the General Councils have remained unalterable, and ever will:’ those very Councils, be it remembered, which teach the doctrine of intolerance to the utmost.—Mr. Plowden observes, ‘that whoever shall say that the Church of Rome has changed, is either deceived himself, or wishes to deceive others.’—And if any other proof were wanting, I might refer to the language of various agitators in Ireland, to whom I shall not condescend to make further allusion. But I again demand, whether the persons, who profess these opinions, and whose conduct has uniformly corresponded to these opinions, are worthy to be replaced in our Senate, as the legislators of a Church which places toleration next to truth, and boasts of protecting the one while it upholds and inculcates the other?”

effect arrogates a second in boasting that she changes not, is *immutable* ! The subject will also prove of further utility, in leading us to investigate our own principles ; to reconsider what we have already professed ; and inquire of ourselves what we are prepared through good report and evil report, in prosperity and adversity, in life and in death, to maintain.

IV. It is time, then, my Protestant and Christian hearers, after thus much said in discussion of the subject, to aim at bringing it home to the mind and conscience of every individual now present. Let us make the application as *personal* as possible, and inquire how are YOU prepared to answer this question ? On whose side are YOU ?

1. There are some, perhaps, among us, who will object to these views as *bigoted* and *illiberal* in the extreme.

Ah ! that Syren of the present day, the idol of the age, LIBERALITY ! What incalculable mischief is she not working with her false tongue, glozing flatteries, and plausible misrepresentations ! The creature is of a fair countenance and comely form, especially when beheld from a distance. Her words are smoother than oil, and her address is most engaging. “ I have peace-offerings with me,” is the language of her profession : but, believe me,

there is poison in her dainties, danger in her friendship, and death in her embraces! How many hath she cast down wounded! and many a strong man hath been slain by her. Oh! be not, then, allured from the straight course, the only path of duty, by her enticing strains: keep at a distance from her shores, beset as they are with ten thousand sunken rocks and hidden quicksands, on which those who strike will probably make shipwreck of faith and good conscience altogether!

But, to use language less metaphorical, *What is the boasted liberality of modern times?* Is it a real principle of heartfelt benevolence, and a tender respect for the sentiments of others, whose general character we must admire, though we cannot coincide with all their peculiar notions? Is it a generous spirit of universal love, kindled by a spark from the altar of God, and fanned into a bright and cheering flame by the breath of prayer and heavenly aspirations? Or is it not rather a careless indifference for the cause of God and the honour of Christ, provided that men be pleased, and the applause of the public ensured? Is it not a secret contempt for consistency and uprightness of conduct, and a lurking spirit of unbelief, which questions tacitly the pre-eminence of the Gospel,—the incomparable excellence of the doctrines of Jesus; looks upon all religions as alike;

and is more than disposed to put the Shasters, the Koran, and the Bible in the same scale? Yes; this is our Liberality—or *Liberalism*, as it should rather be termed, inasmuch as the thing is very closely allied to, if not really of the same species as, *Arianism*, *Socinianism*, *Deism*, *Materialism*, *Atheism*, and every other *ism* which is opposed to right principles, contrary to sound doctrine, and hostile to the Gospel of our Lord! Hear, then, the usual language of Liberality, or in fact Liberalism;—“Why not let every man enjoy his own opinions? What have the peculiarities of creed or cast to do with a man’s moral character? Cannot we be good members of society, though we observe no outward forms, nor subscribe any confession of faith? What better doctrine can we find than the poet’s, who said

“For modes of faith let senseless bigots fight;

His can’t be wrong, whose life is in the right!”

“What then,” continues Liberality, “has religion to do with schools of philosophy or mechanics’ institutions? Cannot a man be a good surgeon, physician, lawyer, mathematician, statesman, or legislator, without religion? And if so, why is any intellectual creature, in the shape of man, to be excluded from participating in the government of this country? Why may not Roman Catholics, for instance, be members of the house of commons, peers of the realm with seats in the upper house, judges, chancellors, privy councillors, and ministers

of state? Yea; we will go a step further: and if the heir to the Crown should happen to profess the religion of the Pope, why is he a whit the more ineligible for the throne? Why may not a Papist be king, even over this hitherto Protestant realm?"

Preposterous! awful! Yet this is the frightful condition, to which the licentious liberality of thousands would eventually bring us! Let me endeavour then, as concisely as possible, to unravel these devices, and answer this plausible though pernicious doctrine.

There is indeed a sense in which I am ready to exclaim, "Let every man enjoy his own opinions." God forbid that we should fetter the undoubted right which every man has to judge for himself, in choosing his doctrinal creed or peculiar mode of worship; at the same time maintaining, that every man is responsible before the tribunal of Jehovah for his own sentiments, as he is answerable at the same bar for his own actions. Let, then, every sect and denomination enjoy the *utmost* liberty of conscience. Touch not a hair of their heads on account of their private opinions. Let them be not only *tolerated*, but *protected* by the laws, in worshipping God after their own fashion. Let the Roman Catholic go unmolested to mass, bow before the crucifix, confess to his priest, believe in purgatory and transubstantiation undisturbed. Let the Socinian

renounce the only foundation for a sinner's hopes, persuade his congregation that there is neither hell nor devil, and proclaim to his deluded followers that Jesus was a mere man, and that they are yet in their sins, without interruption. Yea, let the Deist meet in his secret chamber the miserable dupes of his cavils and perishing disciples of his blasphemies ; let them strengthen each other, if they will, in their *unbelieving belief*, that the Bible is a forgery and Christianity a cheat. We will not break in upon their privacy, nor pollute the day by bringing such abominable tenets to the light. The pupils of Voltaire or Paine are the children of darkness ; and we would leave both them and their blasphemies to perish in darkness together *.

But, my friends, while we suffer the Deist, the Socinian, and the Roman Catholic to enjoy undisturbed each his private sentiments, and to worship God, or worship him not at all, each in their own way ; shall we regard them as suitable characters to be invested with magisterial power ? Shall we render them eligible to the highest

* The author need scarcely remind his readers, that, of course, he does not mean to say that he would not gladly seek the spiritual welfare of such unhappy beings as have openly embraced infidelity. Far from it : he would rejoice in seizing every fair opportunity, by argument or conversation, for leading them to Christ. He cannot hate the person of a fellow-creature, though he utterly abhors, and hates with a perfect hatred, the vile principles of Deism.

offices in the state? Shall we pronounce them as worthy to be members of the legislative or executive in a Christian and Protestant country? * Remember what they have respectively done, and consider what they would probably do, or attempt to do. *The Deist* would use his influence to banish the Bible from the family and the congregation†, and consign it to the moths and the bats, as a false and useless book: *the Socinian* would exert his power for the expunging of a Trinity from the system of revealed religion: *the Papist* would soon cause new chains to be wrought for the consciences of Protestants, if not for their persons: and *one and all* would use their utmost efforts for the subversion of the Establishment, and the partial suppression, if not utter extinction, of the apostolical and scriptural doctrines of the Church of England. Believe me, they would never rest until they had at length succeeded in levelling our holy and beautiful temple to the

* The author is aware that Deists and Socinians are at the present moment *virtually* able to enter Parliament, as well as to hold minor offices in the state: but while the *declaration*, which was enacted as needful to be made for admission to office, when the Corporation and Test Bills were repealed, remains in force, he must regard them as *professedly* excluded. Those who can say "on the true faith of a Christian," do in a degree profess that they are Christians.

† Remember what Infidels attempted in France: witness the gloomy annals of the Revolution, with its horrors and its blasphemies.

ground;—which impious attempt, God in his overruling providence, unerring wisdom, and infinite mercy avert !

2. There may be others, however, in this congregation, who are still *indifferent* to this momentous question.

If there be, I solemnly denounce their indifference as something worse than neutrality,—as spiritual treason ! There is no neutral ground in this business : we cannot look on the lukewarm as friends to the cause. If you are not with us you are against us : if you are not defending the Establishment, you are indirectly aiding those who are ready to pull it to pieces. Halt then no longer between two opinions, but choose at once whom ye will serve, and what principles ye will support.

But, my friends, how is it *that ye can possibly be at all indifferent*, at least as regards the question of admitting Romanists to power in this Protestant realm ? Have you forgotten what Popery has done ? Have you never read of her cruelties and persecutions, when armed with power ? Have you never heard how she hath whetted the sword, or kindled the faggot, and burnt the schismatic and heretic, when possessed of power ? Read the Book of Martyrs,—read the history of the Inquisition,—read the annals of Queen Mary ! Picture to yourselves your Cranmers, and Ridleys, and Latimers, and a host of worthies, burning at the stake, and sealing their testimony with their

blood ; and *will you continue indifferent?* Think of the Hussites and Bohemians, the disciples of Wickliffe, Lord Cobham, and the Lollards ; *and will you abide indifferent?* Remember the instruments of torture, the horrid freight with which the Spanish Armada set sail for these shores ; and *will you be still indifferent?* Think of the massacre of St. Bartholomew's-day *, and France drenched with the blood of THIRTY-SIX THOUSAND Protestants ; compute the horrors which resulted from the revocation of the Edict of Nantes ; and contemplate, though it be a heart-rending picture, the devoted Vaudois hunted up and down their native valleys, and covering the mountains with their bones, left bleaching in the wind ; and *you cannot remain any longer indifferent.* Call to mind, once more, that tragic scene which has blackened the annals of the sister kingdom : remember the massacre, the wanton and unprovoked massacre, of ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY THOUSAND unoffending people, which nearly emptied Ireland of her Protestant inhabitants ; whose only crimes were dissent from the Romish communion and profession of a purer faith : while the deed was contrived by the cruel craftiness of priests and Jesuits, and afterwards approved of by Pope Urban the Eighth ! Think of these tre-

* In 1579, and called the "Parisien Matine." Some historians compute the number as high as 100,000.

mendous facts, and *you will be indifferent no more*:— you must be convinced how intolerant, how cruel, how blood-thirsty, is the spirit of the Papacy, whenever and wherever armed with power. And, reflecting but a moment on the unspeakably awful fact, that as it has been computed **FIFTY MILLIONS OF PROTESTANTS***, exclusive of a host of Jews, Mohammedans, and Pagans, have been the hapless victims of Papal massacres on account of religion in the course of about five hundred years†, you will be petrified with horror, and shrink with wild dismay from the clutches of Rome, as a monster which has preyed on the vitals of mankind, and gorged herself with the blood of the saints of the Most High.

Let me, however, not close this branch of the subject without paying that tribute which is due to the better feelings of many amiable and pious individuals, who have in almost every age been found within the pale of this apostate church:

* Buck's Theological Dictionary—Article, Persecution.

† Making the average of 10,000 victims per annum! Humanity shrinks with horror from the frightful fact.

I have said, “in the course of about 500 years,” reckoning that the chief persecutions of the Papacy commenced about the middle of the twelfth century, and continued in some shape or other, almost without intermission, till the close of the seventeenth; since which time we do not read of any general massacres, though many individuals have suffered, up to a very recent period. A Jew was burnt at Lisbon, at an *Auto-de-Fé*, within the last few years.

and doubtless there are many in this country, and some in this parish, who are people of a kind and benevolent disposition, and would not willingly injure either you or me in body or estate. But is this the result of the conciliating spirit of their religion? Is it not rather the fact, that they are better than the principles of their faith, and more religious than the tenets of their creed; while possibly they have imbibed something of the spirit of surrounding Protestantism? Is it not, that those individuals are more under the influence of Christianity than the yoke of their church, while they come nearer to the image of Christ himself than the self-called vicar of Christ? But Popery, as a system, remains to all intents and purposes unalterably the same,—still as intolerant, as cruel, and as blood-thirsty as ever; and should it, as a system, at any future time gain but a temporary superiority in this or any other Protestant nation, it will forthwith be developed to the world in all its deformity of character and fierceness of disposition, to the dismay and destruction of thousands; filling up the measure of its own guilt, and accomplishing the appointed number of the martyrs of Jesus*.

3. But, my hearers, however *illiberal* some may regard these sentiments to be; however *indifferent* others may still continue; there are doubtless those here, who are sensibly alive to this topic,

* See Rev. vi. 10, 11.

and are far from inattentive observers of the existing signs at this critical juncture.

To you, brethren, my concluding words,—words of exhortation to animate and encourage,—are now to be exclusively addressed : and may they, under the Divine benediction, sink down deeply into your hearts and quicken you into action !—Do **YOU** then be decided and firm ; quit yourselves like men, and be strong : stand forth boldly in your respective social circles and relative spheres of usefulness, in defence of the truth. You are engaged in a good cause,—a cause which must eventually triumph, if truth be mightier than error, and the arm of the Lord more potent than Satan himself and all the powers of darkness and of hell. The religion of Jesus must ultimately become the *dominant* religion ; and the time is fast approaching when “ the Lord shall be King over all the earth ; when there shall be one Lord, and his name one *.” In the mean time, while *you* contend zealously for the faith once delivered to the saints, while *you* range yourselves on the side of vital Christianity, while *you* are prepared to hold fast the apostolical tenets of the Reformation, and the scriptural grounds of the Protestant separation from an idolatrous and persecuting apostasy†, endeavour also to preserve inviolate the hitherto

* Zech. xiv. 9.

† See the Apostasy of Rome clearly demonstrated, in Mr. Cuninghame's 8vo. vol. on that subject.

unimpaired bulwarks of the Constitution in Church and State, as by law established. Oppose by every constitutional means, firmly yet respectfully, and with strict obedience to the powers that be, any degree of concession whatever to Roman Catholics, as unfit to be admitted to temporal power in this Protestant country. Give them nothing beyond the fullest toleration in the enjoyment of their religious persuasion and mode of worship, together with that protection which the state affords to all her subjects. At the same time, treat them, as individual members of society, with affability and kindness, while you abhor the principles of Catholicism and abjure the authority of Popes. Remember that NO PEACE WITH ROME was the motto of our ancestors; and still is it a crime by the statute-law of the land for any officer of the Crown to hold treaty or communication with that dangerous See*. Let us also adopt the motto, NO PEACE WITH ROME! Let us also protest against a concordat with Popes and Cardinals; and vote for no concession whatsoever to the Papacy! And if they talk of pledges and securities, believe them not, nor be caught with so fallacious a bait. Papists can give Protestants no security, so long as the Pope can absolve from oaths and disannul

* It was proposed last session to repeal the bill related to, of course as inconsistent with *modern liberality*; but the author believes it is yet in force, and hopes it ever may be so.

covenants and compacts. And while the infamous doctrine of the infallible church remains unrepealed and in full force and virtue, THAT NO FAITH IS TO BE KEPT WITH HERETICS, I am bold to maintain that the Church of Rome, although, as she at least claims to be, immutable, is NOT TO BE TRUSTED. I am bold to maintain also, that, wretched heretics, as in her estimation we are, and destined in her anathemas to the bottomless pit of everlasting perdition, our only security, under Providence, lies in *having no intercourse with Rome*; while we flee for refuge under a Saviour's wing, and rely on His aid, who is the Ruler of the pontiff of Christendom, no less than the Monarch of the princes and the potentates of the earth!

At the same time, let us make use of every lawful effort and becoming means. Let us lift up a voice from one end of the kingdom to the other, which shall be heard in the council-chambers of the nation, and merit the attention of our senate. Let us approach the throne of our gracious King with affectionate addresses and ardent appeals. Let us reverently call upon him to uphold the Church he hath sworn to protect inviolate; to succour the Constitution he hath engaged to maintain unfringed; and to add to the lustre of his crown, by not deviating a step from those Protestant principles to which his illustrious ancestors and late father, of blessed memory, were ever and invariably faithful.

Above all, let us approach with earnest supplication the footstool of the King of kings. Let us entreat Him to look down upon this truly chosen, but yet guilty nation, with mercy and compassion, for his Son's sake. Let us beseech Him to open his ears to the petitions of his people that prayeth, and bless the labours of his ministering servants, who are standing in the gap, and are lifting up the WARNING VOICE to the people. Let us supplicate the God of all power and might to interpose his outstretched arm, and save us from the power of the enemy; to hasten the fulfilment of his predictions by the mouths of his holy Prophets and Apostles, and bring on the grand deliverance of his people in the extinction of an Apostate Church; granting that the time may speedily arrive, when those holy Apostles and Prophets shall rejoice over her, and the universal shout of exulting myriads shall proclaim, "Babylon the Great is fallen, is fallen! Babylon is thrown down with violence, and is found no more, as a mill-stone sinking in the waters!*" For then shall a great voice of much people be heard in Heaven, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the

* See Rev. xvii. xviii. *passim*.

earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand*.” Then shall the four-and-twenty elders and the four living creatures fall down and worship God that sitteth on the throne, saying, “Amen! Alleluia!” And then shall a voice, responding to the notes, come out from the throne, and say, “Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear Him, both small and great!” To which another voice of a great multitude, as the voice of many waters, and the voice of mighty thunderings, shall reply, “Alleluia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth! Let us be glad and rejoice; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready!” Alleluia! Alleluia! Praise the Lord! Amen. Amen.

* Rev. xix. 1, 2.

A CHARGE

S.A. 1830

DELIVERED TO THE

CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF CHESTER,

AT THE

PRIMARY VISITATION

IN

AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER, MDCCCXXIX



BY

THE RIGHT REVEREND JOHN BIRD, *Summer*

LORD BISHOP OF CHESTER.

LONDON:

J. HATCHARD AND SON, 187, PICCADILLY:

MDCCCXXIX.

Chester :

Printed by J. Fletcher, Bridge-street Row.

TO THE CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF CHESTER,

THIS CHARGE,

PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST,

IS INSCRIBED WITH SINCERE AFFECTION AND RESPECT,

BY THEIR FAITHFUL FRIEND AND BROTHER,

J. B. CHESTER.

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mutual counsel, exhortation, and encouragement: may communicate what seems likely to conduce towards the common end; and may advise together for the supply of such deficiencies, or the correction of such evils as may be impeding good or causing injury.

And for this purpose I come amongst you now for the first time. I trust that we shall all remember that such is the intention of our meeting: that the divine grace will attend this “assembling of ourselves together:” that humility, sincerity, charity and brotherly kindness may be the prevailing spirit in all hearts: and that we may separate again, cheered, assisted, and encouraged towards the great work, to which in the providence of God we have been respectively called. For great, both in dignity and importance, is any work which employs us in the service of God, or concerns the interests even of a single soul.

Among the various subjects which on an occasion of this sort naturally present themselves to our consideration; the one which comes with peculiar prominence to my mind, is the familiar, but inexhaustible subject of Parochial Ministrations. And I am the more at liberty to follow the bent of my own mind

in this respect, because happily such has been the activity and ability of my Predecessors, and so cheerful the compliance which has been paid to their regulations, that in the administration of the Diocese there is no accumulation of abuses requiring to be noticed, or crying for correction. My wishes will be fully gratified, if by my own vigilance and the assistance of my Clergy, I am enabled to maintain and complete the system which I find generally established.

I begin, then, by observing, that the object of the parochial ministry, is to carry into effect the merciful purpose of God in the dispensation of the Gospel: that wherever an assemblage of men is collected and located together, provision should be made for their souls: that is, provision that they be "brought to God" through Christ Jesus, that they be instructed and maintained in his faith, and thus enabled to render this present life an habitual preparation for Eternity. The first Christian churches consisted of men gathered out from the world around them which still remained in ignorance and idolatry. But from the time when Christianity was generally received as the national religion of any country, that country has been parcelled

mutual counsel, exhortation, and encouragement: may communicate what seems likely to conduce towards the common end; and may advise together for the supply of such deficiencies, or the correction of such evils as may be impeding good or causing injury.

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his written word ; he maintains it by his Spirit. And this being so, we might expect that in proportion as the Founder, the Head, the Governor, the Preserver of this kingdom is held up to prominent view, in that degree the kingdom would be extended and flourish. In proportion as the value of his mysterious purchase, with all it implies of mercy in Him and of destitution in ourselves ; in proportion as the holiness of his example, the superintendence of his care, the operations of his Spirit are brought forward and enforced : in the same degree we might hope that effectual results would follow, and shew themselves in what all desire to see, "repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ."

This it would be reasonable to expect ; and this reasonable expectation is confirmed by experience. No prophecy is more evidently accomplished than that contained in the pregnant declaration, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." When Christ is habitually and conspicuously elevated as the Sun of the religious system, and all the graces and qualities which constitute religion, are made to emanate from him, and to revolve round him, then there will be light: while darkness will prevail in a greater or less degree, in

proportion as that Sun is hid behind a cloud. Even imperfect religious teaching; that which is defective in ability, or mixed in part with error, has considerable influence, influence in other ways inexplicable, when it keeps this 'vantage ground: whilst without it, the most accurate statements, the most undeniable truths, the most incontrovertible arguments are uttered and are heard in vain.

If this is matter of general experience, it must be interesting to trace it to its causes: and there are two undisputed facts which may furnish a sufficient explanation. First, we all agree, that no religious effect can be produced upon any heart, except by the Holy Spirit. But the Holy Spirit, we well know, is communicated to us through the Son, whose especial gift he is, whose prophetic promise he fulfils. If then we desire the gift, for ourselves or for others, we must seek it through its Author: the Holy Spirit can only be expected through the appointed channel of communication. Nay, we are positively assured of this; for if we are the successors of the apostles, we must succeed to the conditions on which their apostleship was to become effective: and the words addressed to them are addressed to ourselves also, "I am

the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.*

The second fact is this: that men do not so much require to be instructed in moral truth, as in religious obligation. They are no strangers to the broad distinction between right and wrong, holiness and ungodliness. They commonly acknowledge them in words, whilst they practically confound them. They need to be convinced, not what sin is, but of the sinfulness of sin: to be taught that the "wages of sin is death," eternal death. And the atonement made by the Son of God, the sacrifice of the cross, is the great instrument of working this conviction. If any lower consideration, if any temporal arguments could prevail against the corruption which exists within, truly may we affirm that gross vice would long ago have disappeared, and flagrant wickedness been banished from our land. The worldly consequences of dishonesty, of intemperance, of impure and sensual habits, of every species of that profligacy which, in some classes, almost universally attends the absence of religion; these consequences are so evident and so miserable, that to all who do not acknowledge

* John xv. 5.

the corruption of our nature, it must be an inexplicable problem why the opposite course of sobriety, honesty, and chastity is not followed for its own sake. Whether virtue be on earth its own reward or not, that vice is its own punishment is denied by none. And yet vice, with all its miserable, palpable, and undisputed consequences, vice lamentably prevails. We want, therefore, we evidently want something stronger than these arguments, some force proportioned to the resistance, before we can produce the effect which all concur in desiring. And this sufficient force, this argument which comes not "in word only but also in power," is furnished to us by the incarnation and sacrifice of Christ Jesus, and the redemption wrought by his death. It is found there, and only there. Such an evidence of the evil of sin, united with what we are able simultaneously to display, the means of escaping from its misery: such a testimony of the holiness and of the mercy of God combined, is capable of effects which philosophy attempts in vain, and philanthropy abandons in despair. No enforcement of law and no persuasion of eloquence can be compared with that single declaration, "the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin." The blood shed, displays the value of the soul, and the guilt

which lies upon it:—the promised acceptance declares the possibility of salvation. The sinner is convinced of sin, but such is the wisdom of that remedy for sin which God has provided, the very argument which works conviction in him, delivers him from despair.

These are the grounds on which I conclude, and these the reasons by which I explain the fact, that the preaching which is deeply and universally imbued with the doctrines of the Gospel, is exclusively the preaching which is effective; is the preaching which really awakens men's hearts, which converts them from this world to God, and enables them to increase in his Holy Spirit more and more, till they come to his everlasting kingdom.

2. The other point in our mode of preaching, which I think it essential to notice, is a discriminate application of the subject. A sermon without this, is a weapon aimed at random. It is an argument without a conclusion: a speech without a peroration: it contains premises, from which no inference is drawn. It may affirm much truth; but few take truths, especially unwelcome truths, to themselves, unless they are brought forcibly home. The

apostles too have instructed us to "make a difference" in our treatment of different characters: and have left examples of addresses and invitations to every class of hearers.

Some writers have advised, in order to secure a profitable application, to place an existing character as a model before the mind, and so delineate the class to which the remarks are directed. It is not desirable, however, in public addresses, to attempt too minute divisions of character; and personality, I need not say, must be carefully avoided. But there are certain clear and wide distinctions which must be found in every congregation, between those who believe or believe not, those who observe or transgress the divine laws, those who habitually seek the kingdom of God, or habitually neglect it: and unless these distinctions are practically kept in view, all pulpit ministrations must fail of their effect.

One single criterion, even if it stood alone, that of the Lord's table, must oblige us to consider a great part of all our congregations as essentially deficient in Christian knowledge or Christian feeling. How small a portion of those congregations are communicants, you are your-

selves aware. And though many may communicate with little sincerity, and therefore as a positive test of Christian faith, we cannot absolutely receive it: yet as a negative test I fear that it is too sure, and that very few really scruple to communicate, whom remaining as they are, any thinking person would wish to see communicants: we may charitably believe that they are kept back by erroneous views or superstitious fears, but I am strongly of opinion that few are really withheld except by the apathy of gross ignorance, or the consciousness of allowed sin.*

As there is this difference actually existing in the characters of our congregations, we must show that we are aware of it: we must no more treat all as if they possessed the privileges of Christians, than we treat all as careless, or profligate, or unbelievers: but we must be constantly trying, and expecting, to add to the one class, and diminish the other; to make the "children of this world" become as "children of light."

But we must discriminate between the several classes, before we can hope to affect them: and the grounds of discrimination must be clear in our minds, in order that we may represent it

* See Appendix, No. 1.

clearly to the parties, and induce them to “examine themselves, whether they be in the faith ; to prove their own selves.”

II. Having said thus much concerning that important part of clerical duty, the public discourses in the church, I come now to consider the other mode by which the hearts of men are disposed towards the attainment of everlasting salvation, or being so disposed are led onward in their way : I mean, catechetical or personal instruction. Without this, little permanent effect will be produced by any ministry ; and with it, a minister who is comparatively feeble in the pulpit will be more useful than the most eloquent who confines himself to the pulpit alone. It would be a great mistake to believe that even those among our people who are commonly seen in their places at church, must have competent Christian knowledge. One proof of deficiency has already been alluded to : and experience tells us what lamentable ignorance may exist together with tolerable regularity of attendance. This is no wonder : the wonder would be if it were otherwise ; the wonder is, that the contrary is supposed and taken for granted. For whoever considers the matter, and judges of religion as

he would judge of any other subject about which mankind are conversant, cannot but perceive that uninformed minds are incapable of deriving material advantage from what the pulpit affords: i. e. from a lecture. Attendance at church, too, is commonly, and often necessarily, broken and interrupted: so that no opportunity is given for receiving any systematic course of instruction. And, further, in every parish the number is considerable whom either age, or infirmity, or distance, or the exigencies of a family preclude almost entirely from the public services of the church. What must become of these, if no instruction is brought to their own homes? It leads to the lamentable, but not unfrequent case, when the minister is summoned to a dying hour, and finds ignorance which it is too late to remove, or impenitence which cannot be awakened: or at best, perhaps, repentance which he is afraid of trusting, because he can have no evidence of its sincerity, because experience teaches him in such cases to doubt of its sincerity, and because, at best, there is danger, grievous danger, lest bye-standers should be encouraged in neglect and delay.

The absence of such instruction is one cause, why it often happens that a strong reli-

gious interest which has been excited by lively and energetic preaching, is found to languish and subside on a change of ministry. The people have been roused, or have been gratified: but the occasion has not been seized for introducing that sound and extended "knowledge" which we are enjoined to "add to faith." The stream having no resource from within, being only fed by a temporary torrent, is too shallow to run long.

It must have been very different in the early ages of the Church: with those, for instance, to whom St. Paul's epistles were addressed. Being designed for the use of persons who had little other written information, they were of course intelligible to the average description of Christians, the majority of whom must then, as at all times, have consisted of the inferior ranks. They must have had therefore more systematic and effective instruction, than is commonly possessed by the same ranks now. And we learn from history that it was so. We learn from history that adult candidates for Baptism were not admitted to that rite, or allowed to bear the honourable title of Christians, till by a long and regular process of education as catechumens, their ignorance had

been enlightened, and they were no longer "children in understanding."

For this sort of edification Scripture is the only groundwork. And Scripture affords a large variety of subjects which may be most usefully turned to the purpose. The scheme of Redemption may be traced from the Fall, and the first promises, through the line of history and prophecy, to the advent, the ministry, the death, and the resurrection of the Messiah, and the subsequent establishment of the expected kingdom. The historical parts of the Old Testament may be explained in succession. The principal characters which are detailed in the Bible may be developed: always a most interesting method of inculcating religious duty. Any of the Gospels, and several of the Epistles may be continuously read and illustrated; and the hearers from time to time examined in them.* By patient and discriminate instruction of this kind the most illiterate persons are gradually enabled to acquire a degree of knowledge which wonderfully displays the power of "the testimony of the Lord," converting the soul; and because it converts the soul, "giving wisdom unto the simple." We may not trace

* See Appendix, No. II.

advancement from week to week, or even from month to month : but year by year the improvement will be evident. Scripture, when read privately, will then be read so as to edify : strange and novel doctrines will not carry away the people : and many will gradually be brought to seriousness and earnestness, who once, perhaps, were careless and indifferent, and wondered at their neighbours who took more interest in " things unseen." And whilst this private and individual education is carried on, discourses from the pulpit, instead of meeting with no subjects capable of receiving them, fall into their proper place, and combine to produce the consistent and intelligent Christian.

And here I cannot but pause and reflect, my reverend brethren, on the high distinction which belongs to us, that we are allowed to co-operate with the word and the Spirit of God in effecting this wonderful change in human nature, which is suggested to me by the words intelligent and consistent Christian. Compare the ignorant and unreflecting peasant, who moves in the same dull and too often sinful track, with no ideas beyond the ground he treads upon, the sensual indulgencies which he gratifies, and the day that is passing over his head :—compare him

with his enlightened neighbour, nay with himself if happily he becomes enlightened, when he follows the same path of active industry, but makes it a path towards his heavenly Father's kingdom :—and then perceive by a visible example what the grace of God effects through the agency of man. Or take a case, too common alas, too familiarly known to many who hear me. Take the case of those who see their occupation sinking from under them ; their means of support annually decreasing, and little prospect of its melioration. Suppose that the views of these, and such as these, are bounded by this present world, what can they be but unhappy, restless, discontented ; defying God, and murmuring at man : distressing the philanthropist, because he sees no comfort left to them ; distressing the statesman, because he can devise no remedy for their relief : above all distressing the Christian, who sees the future prospect far darker than the present gloom. Suppose the case of one thus circumstanced, having no hope beyond this world : and then contemplate the change which would be produced, if any of the means by which grace is communicated to the heart, should inspire the same person with the principles and the faith of the Gospel ; converting him from whatever

is evil in his ways, and thus removing all the accumulation which sin adds to poverty : reconciling him to hardships and privations, as the intended trial of his faith, the lot of many of God's most approved servants : and lighting up the darkness of this world by the rays which precede that which is to come, the earnest of a brighter dawn :—compare, I pray, these two pictures, and then admire with me, for what can be more worthy of your admiration, the blessing which God designed for man ; and deplore with me, for what more deserves your lamentation, the blindness of man who refuses the good and keeps to himself the evil : and resolve with me, for there is need of your resolution, that as far as in you lies you will make the mercies of God available, and disseminate those principles which exalt the low and enrich the poor, which teach men to “ rejoice even in tribulation,” and render a Lazarus the object of envy to a Dives.

And can these things be ? “ O Lord God, thou knowest.” Earnestness, disinterestedness, simplicity, godly sincerity, patience in teaching, watchfulness in seizing the favourable moment for counsel, are known to overcome even that which seems most hopeless ; the

effects of natural corruption, inflamed by evil example, and strengthened by habits of wilful disobedience.

It will be asked, however, "Who is sufficient," physically "sufficient for these things?" Certainly in our larger parishes it is not possible for the strength or activity of the Clergy alone to provide for such individual instruction. But there is a resource at hand: when the population is moderate, nothing is wanting but resolution and contrivance; and in the case of a denser population, the bane and the antidote, the evil and the remedy are found together. The same population which presses so heavily upon the clergyman, affords also that variety of ranks, and degree of superior education, that many fellow workers may assist the minister and diminish his labours. In this manner the apostles were enabled to execute the manifold concerns which lay upon them. It would evidently have been impracticable even for those who had an extraordinary measure of inspiration, to communicate to the multitudes who embraced Christianity all the preliminary and all the collateral knowledge, which a heathen required before he could become an intelligent Christian. And we might wonder

how this information was obtained : and how the Epistles should allude as they do, to the prophets, and the Jewish history, and the dealings of God with man from the beginning, as matters with which all were conversant, as if all, like Timothy, from their youth had “known the Holy Scriptures.” Incidentally, however, we learn the explanation. We find that there were persons, who, though not apostles, not commissioned to preach the Gospel, were yet employed in many ways connected with it. St. Paul speaks of them as his “helpers in Christ Jesus ;” as “labouring much in the Lord ;” as “labouring with him in the Lord.” And of the mode in which they were engaged, we can judge from the passage relating to Apollos : who “being fervent in spirit, spoke and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.” “Whom when Aquila and Priscilla heard (these were among Paul’s “helpers in Christ Jesus”)* “they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. Here we have a specimen of the method in which those whom the apostle so honourably mentions as “labouring in the Lord,” as “labouring with him in the Lord,” were accustomed privately to instruct others

* See Romans xvi. 3. Acts xviii. 24.

in those truths, which on the apostle's public testimony they had heard and learnt and believed themselves.†

The apostles then, however above succeeding ministers in their endowments, were like them in other respects: and because in bodily strength they were but men, and their day like ours, was limited in its duration, they embraced such means of assistance in their various labours as came within their power. They have left us an example. Let the minister of a populous district, using careful discrimination of character, select such as "are worthy," and "of good report," and assign them their several employments under his direction: they may lessen his own labour by visiting and examining the schools, by reading and praying with the infirm and aged, by consoling the fatherless and widows in their

† We cannot with any probability refer these allusions to the mere duties commonly ascribed to the deaconesses, as assisting at female baptisms, and relieving the female sick. St. Paul did not generally baptize: neither was he so stationary, or did he minister to such settled congregations of Christians, as to be much concerned in the management of their temporal affairs. Therefore when he sends salutation to "Tryphena and Tryphosa who labour in the Lord:" to the "beloved Persis who laboured much in the Lord:" to "those women who laboured with him in the Lord:" he without doubt alludes to their privately teaching and persuading others what through his public ministry they had themselves learnt to believe and value. Nothing else would have justified the expression, *labouring in the Lord*: in nothing else would they have been his *helpers*, or *laboured with him* in the Lord.

affliction, and pursuing the many nameless ways by which it is in the power of one Christian to benefit and relieve another. Such charity, even more than any other charity, is useful to the giver as well as the receiver: it occupies minds which for want of engagement might otherwise prey upon themselves: and it occupies them in a way which better fits them for eternity: in religion, as in worldly matters, we often learn our best lessons by teaching. What image more exemplifying the reality of pastoral care, what more truly Christian picture can be presented to our contemplation, than that of a minister uniting with himself the best disposed and the most competent portion of his parishioners, and superintending counsels and directing plans which have God for their object, and the eternal welfare of his people for their end: seizing every opportunity of general and individual good, correcting mischiefs at their first rising, providing for the spiritual wants of every different age and class, and thus striving, as far as may be allowed, to “present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.” How otherwise can we avoid the censure of the Prophet: “my sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill; (too exact a description of many of our widely extended parishes:)

yea my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth ; and none did search or seek after them." If they resorted to their pasture, it was well : but none did search or seek after them ; "they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered."* How otherwise, again, can we comply with the requisitions of the Ordination Service : " See that you never cease your labour, your care and diligence, until ye have done all that lieth in you to bring all such as are committed to your charge unto that agreement in the faith and knowledge of God, and to that ripeness and perfectness of age in Christ, that there be no place left for error in religion or for viciousness of life." Nor is this any visionary notion ; pleasing in idea, but impracticable in reality. Numerous parishes, of different degrees of population, have been brought under such discipline with more or less success.† And I feel convinced that whoever is anxious to promote the glory of God, to assist the most important interests of his fellow creatures, to confirm the the security of his country, or maintain the stability of his Church, can ensure none of those great objects more effectively than by means like these. Without them, in some of

* Ezekiel xxxi†. 5. 6.

† Appendix, No. III.

our crowded districts of dense and extended population, the Church is lost sight of, parochial distinctions are obliterated, and the reciprocal charities and duties of the pastor and the flock are forgotten by the people, because it is physically impossible that they should be satisfactorily discharged.

You may suppose that I am well aware of the difficulties which still intervene, in our large towns, and obstruct a scheme of general superintendence; especially from the insufficiency of church accommodation. It must not hinder our attempting all we can, that it is impossible to effect all we desire; that our population has outgrown our system, that our ecclesiastical divisions are imperfect and inconvenient. If we wait till all difficulties are smoothed, we shall wait till this world passes away. I am one of those who are inclined to expect much. I have seldom known any thing undertaken in the cause of religion, with a right spirit, in which some success has not been obtained. "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand, for thou knowest not whether shall prosper this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good."

And surely there is a cause. Circumstances

are at work in every part of this country, not more affecting its manufacturing than its agricultural population, which leave little to expect for a large proportion of its inhabitants except hardships and difficulties. Religion is not more really necessary to these than it is to every man. But those are more evidently destitute without it, who in this world "have evil things." And further, it is the only remedy which we can offer. Mitigation there may be, assistance there may be: but effectual remedy there is none other. Whatever comfort can be bestowed, must proceed from religion; whatever temporal improvement can accrue, must proceed from religion. For all the evils we lament, are increased by imprudence, intemperance, malice, violence: and religion teaches foresight, moderation, patience, and contentment: and alas! because it does so, as if the natural enmity of the human heart did not afford sufficient obstacle, it is opposed by the influence of all who make a gain of other men's ungodliness. Brethren, we must quit ourselves like men: like men who are placed in the breach: like men to whom the fortress is committed. My firm belief is, that if our beloved country retains its greatness and its comforts, they will be preserved to her by Religion alone. And of religion the principal instruments must always be the parochial clergy.

Every parish, the main body of whose inhabitants are living in the active faith of Christ,* is a province gained over to the Lord's kingdom ; that is the first thing ;—but it is not the only thing : every such parish is likewise another buttress added to the stability of all that we love and value. “ Righteousness exalteth a nation ; but sin is a reproach ” and will ultimately be a destruction “ to any people.”

I have thus delivered my sentiments upon two important points ; sentiments soon uttered, but which have not been suddenly taken up, to answer a present purpose, but formed on the consideration and observation of many years. I am aware that what I have proposed for the practice of the parochial Minister, can in few cases be carried into execution, without the devotion of his whole mind, as well as time, to the work in which he is engaged. But I need not remind you, that you entered upon your profession with this promise most solemnly and unequivocally made. And I am convinced that such a consecration of ourselves, our souls and bodies, to the service of God, is repaid by an immediate reward which passes the understanding of the worldly and indifferent. Indeed it is as needful to our comfort, as to our use-

fulness. A clergyman who has his heart in his profession, is the happiest of men : in the business of his life at least, if not in actual temperament: (that may be prevented by trials, anxieties, and disappointments :) but his employment leads him to advance others, and advance himself, in the only pursuit which, if we believe the Scripture, has any real value or importance. On the contrary, if there were a clergyman who had not his heart in his profession, he must be "of all men most miserable:" restrained by the decencies expected of him from objects to which he is really attached, or condemning himself for neglecting duties in which he feels no interest. But it is still more certain that the time will come, when those who have taken upon themselves to be "stewards of the mysteries of God," must render the account which is required of stewards: and that then, to be found faithful, whether over few things or over many things, whether in the use of ten talents or of one, will be an honour cheaply bought at the price of ten thousand transitory worlds. "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable; always abounding in the work of the Lord, inasmuch as ye know that your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord."

APPENDIX, &c.

APPENDIX No. I. (Page 13.)

By the return of population in 1821, it appears that of every hundred persons, twenty are under 7 years of age: twenty are between the ages of 7 and 15: ten between 15 and 20: leaving fifty from the age of 20 upwards. More than half therefore, not only of *our congregations*, but of *our people* ought to be habitual communicants, before we have any just grounds to be satisfied with their state. I shall not detail the awfully different result which has been furnished me from the several parishes, because each clergyman can calculate it for himself: but I am sure that the fact justifies any strength of language that I can use, and demands any measure of zealous exertion that the clergy can devise, in order that they may introduce a state of things more resembling a community of Christians. One cause to which I cannot help attributing much of the inattention to this ordinance which prevails, together with much of the ignorance of our people, is the early age at which it has been usual to admit children to Confirmation. It does not follow, that because they must be acquainted with the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, before they are confirmed, they should also be confirmed whenever they are thus qualified; for if so, a child of six from an Infant School might be better prepared than his neighbour of sixteen. Confirmation implies a solemn religious obligation: which very few, under sixteen, are able to enter upon in earnest. If that were considered the lowest age at which any were admissible, Confirmation might be followed by regular attendance at the Lord's table, and a system of Christian life begin which should not be laid aside. This would exclude many from Confirmation, for a time, no doubt; but it would exclude none whose admission is really desirable: and many of those whom the inadequacy of our Church accommodation has rendered dissenters from our discipline while they retain our doctrine, would be added to the number confirmed, when they witnessed the solemnity and experienced the utility of such an intelligent recognition of Christian obligations.

Even among those who are communicants, I find a custom prevailing which is very far from satisfactory: that of attending the Sacrament, on the great Festivals of Christmas or Easter, and at no other time. This looks too much as if the Sacrament were considered as a duty to be performed, or a rite to be observed only, and not as the habitual practice of a Christian, by which his faith were to be maintained in continual exercise. Such a custom is a sort of practical acknowledgment that men are desirous of the benefit of the Gospel as far as it can be obtained by compliance with a form, but that they do not possess the spirit and will not submit to the obligation of Christians. It is very needful, when we insist upon the Sacrament either publicly or privately, to place it in its proper light, as the test of a Christian state of mind; and it might tend to remove a remnant of popery which still exists too generally, if the Sacrament were never urged upon the sick, or even administered to them without much consideration, unless they have been previously communicants. The withholding it will seldom be felt as a serious evil, unless the object of the Sacrament itself is misunderstood, and if its object is misunderstood, it is far better that it should be withheld. The temporary consolation, of which a few who may be really entitled to such consolation will thus be deprived, is of far less consequence than the perpetuation of an error and an abuse, which there is reason to fear has been the ruin of multitudes.

I take this opportunity of alluding to another custom which I find in a few parishes of this diocese, that of distributing the alms or a part of them among the poorer communicants at the time of administration. The dangers of this practice are so obvious, that I request it may be from henceforth discontinued.

APPENDIX No. II. (*Page 17.*)

The only way in which this instruction can be given, in parishes of any size, is by collecting together at fixed hours a certain number, not too large a number, of those who live contiguously, and explaining the Scriptures to them in a familiar

~~maner.~~ In this way, one hour will answer the purpose of fifteen or twenty, and more interest will be roused; and the private concerns of the family will be avoided, which materially interfere with the usefulness of visits to individuals. It has been objected to me, that the people will not value such instruction enough, to come for it. This does not agree with experience; and will seldom be found, I believe, when it is offered with sincerity. Let it be fairly tried for a year, and continued or dropped according to the result. To the clergyman himself the exercise will be invaluable: and further, "If thou warn the wicked of his way, to turn from it, if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul." More remarks on this plan will be found in an excellent little Tract, "Parochial duties practically illustrated,"* the author of which writes to me: "I have no scruple in saying that if I see any decided blessing on any part of a long ministry, (above 26 years) it is to this species of instruction; and that the 209 hours of the last year, which were employed in this manner, were in every respect—as tending to fill the church, and attaching a flock to scriptural inquiry, and to our church-establishment—more fruitful than any other ministerial labours of the twelve months."

APPENDIX No. III. (Page 24.)

The large and populous town of Brighton has been for some years divided into 6 districts, with their respective Secretaries and Committees. Each district consists of from 9 to 18 sub-divisions, and has visitors regularly appointed to each sub-division, some males but chiefly females. The District Committee meet monthly, to receive the reports of the several visitors and transact the business of the District.

The objects of the Society, and therefore the objects kept in view by the Visitors, are 1. relief to the sick and unfortunate. 2. The encouragement of provident habits. 3. The improvement of moral and religious character generally. 4. The prin-

principles of the rising generation. 5. The suppression of mendicancy and imposture.

The Report for 1827 says :—" Experience has taught us, that it is impossible to go among forty families and exercise these acts of judicious kindness without insuring their respect and affection. The poor are found to be grateful beyond expectation; and get so attached to the Visitors as to resemble a large family. This is no exaggeration. It is a sweet reward for the trouble of the employment. The Visitors thus obtain a great moral influence over the district. They are able to convey many useful impressions; their own character is more or less reflected from those around them. A serious conduct, and greater regard for religious observances, and more attention to the education of their children are the fruits of this intercourse; and the character of the low population of Brighton is perceived, by sober persons, to be considerably improved by this constant visiting of the members of the Society, for the space of three years."

" P.S. The mechanism of this Society is equally adapted to a small village or to a populous town. It has been tried in some villages, and has answered extremely well; of course its operations are there much simplified.*

It is obvious, as remarked in the last extract, that if such a system can be maintained successfully in so large a town as Brighton, and in proportion to its size, certainly not containing a large number of Clergy : it becomes comparatively simple in a population of from 2 to 5,000, where nothing is necessary, except to assign a district of from 25 to 50 houses to different individuals, who shall have their stated times for calling, to see that no want is unrelieved, no needful advice withheld: shall report to the Clergyman such cases as require his interference, and shall meet him at regular periods for the purpose of counsel and encouragement. In this manner the parish is really *under pastoral superintendence*; and yet the Clergyman has far more undistracted time at his command than he would have without

* Whoever is desirous of obtaining the necessary papers and forms for a similar Society, may apply personally, or by letter, post-paid, to the Agent, Mr. Foard, Society's Office, 63, High-street, Brighton.

such system, even while only a twentieth or a fiftieth of the like visits were paid.

The regulations of another District Visiting Association, also established in two large portions of a town of immense size, are as follow.

DISTRICT VISITING ASSOCIATION.

The object of this Association is to visit the poor in its several divisions, for the purpose of promoting their regular attendance on the public worship of God, their general attention to the duties of religion, and their endeavours to provide suitable instruction for their children.

It is recommended that the visitors should direct their especial attention to those whom they find to have *wholly* neglected Public Worship, &c. without deeming it necessary to repeat their visits to those families who are connected with any other congregation than that of ——— Church.

That the visits be repeated once a fortnight, and that a tract be left with each family that is deemed as coming within the object of this Association.

That such families as are found to have neglected public worship be strongly urged to an immediate attention to this most important duty; and when such advice shall be found, on three successive visits, to have been disregarded, the visitors shall for a time, at least, discontinue their calls.

Concerning this plan a clergyman states: —“ We have most decidedly found benefit resulting from the system, though in its infancy: and especially it appears calculated to attach the people to the Established Church. Many who had left it for other worship have now come back to us, and some of that part of the population who never frequented any worship at all, (*which I believe to be the immense majority in these large manufacturing towns*) have been brought into the bosom of the church, and in instances that we know of, are in the way to be effectually reformed.”

To these I add one more, which is just commencing its operations, in a town containing 11,000 persons, and which was proposed in the following circular.

The Scheme intended is:—

1. To divide the whole town into districts: the number of families in each district to be determined by the number of those who may afford their personal services as Visitors.

2. That the Visitor of each district shall be a member of the Church of England, and appointed by the Clergy.

3. That the aim of the Visitors shall be to advance the extension of vital religion in every possible way, within their different districts.

4. That they shall make early enquiries of the heads of every family they may visit, concerning the number and ages of their children; and the Sunday Schools they may be attending. If they be not already attending any School, they shall encourage their being sent to the *nearest* School of the Established Church, if they have no preference.

5. To ascertain, at the Schools, the attendance and behaviour of the children, and to report the result, from time to time, to the heads of each family.

6. To encourage and assist each family they may visit, in procuring useful books, and to be ready to receive periodical payments for Bibles, Prayer-Books, and Manuals of Family Prayer.

7. To point out the advantages of Savings Banks, and Charitable Institutions, such as the Dispensary, the Benevolent Society, and Ladies' Charity.

8. To keep an eye over the families in sickness: to see that they have necessary relief: and to be especially watchful, at such seasons, to foster any signs which may appear of religious feeling.

9. That for the purpose of such relief a general fund shall be raised, and maintained by donations and annual subscriptions, not exceeding ten shillings a year.

10. To have stated meetings of the whole body once a quarter, to consult upon any points that may be needful. The Prayers at the beginning and close of every such meeting to be always taken by some of the Clergy present."

These specimens are given, because it is a great saving of time as well as of anxiety, and often of disappointment, to enter into other men's labours, and accommodate them to our own use and plans.

I would further observe that such schemes can in very few places be carried into execution, unless the assistance of female agency is called in. That women should not in large towns be the only visitors, is evident; but there is no prospect of finding men in any number sufficiently disengaged for the purpose: and frequently they would be less proper agents, and less likely to succeed. The persons who are to be found at home, and with whom therefore the Visitors would be chiefly concerned, are themselves women: the men are employed abroad in their various occupations. And further, a great step will be gained towards all that we are anxious to accomplish, if these, the mothers and mistresses of the family, be brought under the influence of religion. Should authority be wanting, we have that of the early ages decidedly in our favour: and we cannot suppose that St. James alluded to Christian men alone when he made the "visiting of the fatherless and widows in their affliction" one test of "pure and undefiled religion."

The clergy, in selecting their Visitors, will of course use proper discrimination: the most zealous will not always be the most desirable: though many such, whom the clergyman often considers as thorns in his side, because their interference is unauthorized, might become valuable auxiliaries when acting under his direction. The best mode of treating a swelling stream, is to give it vent, and open for it an useful channel. In this free country, persons who feel strongly upon the importance of an object, will not be restrained from acting; and if they are not with us, they may be against us. After all, what can we procure in this world, either of temporal or spiritual advantage, without some risk of possible disappointment?

The question is, whether we will embrace these or similar measures, or whether we will consent to acknowledge that a large portion of our people, are existing in a state of deplorable ignorance, which no attempt is made to enlighten or remove. I have before me the result of personal inquiries into the state of a large

town, which there is no reason to suppose is worse than the average state of many large towns. The account of one week's inquiry is as follows.

"September 10. Visited 40 families, comprising 176 persons. Mournful to relate, except an old widow, all are in ignorance; not but there are shades of difference amongst them, but all woefully dark and defective. Ten seemed desirous of instruction, five paid marked attention, sixteen are without Bibles, five are widows, nine statedly employed, twelve occasionally, the rest struggling hard for an existence; except four families, the children are mostly at school: very few statedly attend any place of worship, and the far greater number not at all: want of clothing is the common excuse.

"September 11. Visited 35 families, containing 136 persons, 5 of whom had a knowledge of the truth; 20 families have Bibles, and two Testaments, eight attend a place of worship duly, the rest seldom or never; seven are widows; our visit was generally well received, some listened with deep concern, others betrayed the grossest ignorance: few have constant employment, but many complain of the want of it. Several have nothing to live on but by selling stones beaten into sand. A considerable number of the children attend school, but many of them do not, and, like their parents, cannot read."

"September 12. Visited 35 families, consisting of 164 persons; one only can be said to have her mind enlightened; 4 not altogether destitute of knowledge; but the rest deplorably ignorant; 14 have Bibles and 1 a Testament; 7 are widows; 8 persons are statedly employed, the rest occasionally; few attend any place of worship. One woman said that she had lived thirty years in that place, and had seen when some regard was paid to the Sabbath, but now she saw no difference between it and other days, except that there was more drinking and fighting."

"September 13. Visited 42 families, 232 persons; 9 of these have had their minds enlightened, 2 partially so, the rest in ignorance; 26 have Bibles, and 3 have Testaments; 5 are widows; a fourth part have constant employment, the rest not, and some very little."

"September 14. Visited 42 families, containing 197 persons; 10 are widows; 3 individuals have their minds enlightened, 12

inquiring for the truth; few regular in their attendance on public worship; want of employment much complained of, very few have constant work. Several remarkable instances of ignorance were exhibited to-day, although the people generally were not sunk to the lowest state of depression; but both in houses and persons conveyed an idea of comfort rather than otherwise, civil and discreet in their manners."

"September 15. Visited 41 families, numbering 200 persons; 1 of these an enlightened Christian, 5 not altogether ignorant, most of the others grossly so; 8 are widows; 16 individuals have Bibles; 7 in constant employment, the rest very seldom: grievous complaints on this account."

Here then there is a description of 1104, or excluding those probably under 20 years of age, 550 persons, not selected, but visited in the regular order of their abodes, only 43, or one twelfth part of whom had embraced or even become acquainted with the way of salvation revealed in the Gospel: leaving for each one who made religion a concern, *twelve* totally ignorant and indifferent. Surely, when such is the state of things in any part of a Christian country, there is a *dignus Vindice nodus* which not only justifies, but imperatively demands vigorous means and increased exertions.

I subjoin the plan of a *Speculum gregis*, which was shown me by a Clerical friend, and may materially assist a general parochial inquiry. It is probable that most Clergy are already in possession of something of the kind, as indispensable to any pastoral superintendence. A good plan, however, is a great saving of time. The first aspect of a large town seems appalling. This might deter from entering upon the charge: but must not deter from fulfilling its duties when undertaken. As far as concerns the mere inquiry, 8 or 10 families, comprising 40 or 50 individuals, might be visited and recorded in an hour: so that 1000 persons, whose abodes adjoined each other, would occupy but ten mornings of 2 or 3 hours each. Such trouble is its own reward: and the recompense arises from the change gradually occurring in the "general remarks:"—(it *will* *decur*, when means and pains are used:)—and instead of "indifference," "ignorance," or "vicious habits," "inquiry," "attention," "sobriety," or perhaps something still more satisfactory, will be noted in the page.

Speculum Parochiale.

TOWNSHIP OF

No.	Name and age.	Religious Pro- fession.	Occupation.	Have the Scriptures	C B	Children.		School.		No. in Family.	Commu- nicant.	General remarks.
						Male.	Fem.	Day.	Sunday.			

APPENDIX No. IV.

Let none despair of producing this effect, or rest satisfied till they have produced it, and can see the main body of their parishioners seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and exhibiting such a state as in the event of their death, would give reasonable and scriptural hope respecting them. Why should the gospel have less power upon our people now, than it had upon the Thessalonians to whom St. Paul was able to appeal, as having "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven:" concerning whom he could "thank God without ceasing, because when they received the word of God, they received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh in them that believe." Apostolical zeal and apostolical doctrine will still have the same effect. We have the like promise of assistance: "Lo, I am with you alway even unto the end of the world." We have the same weapon entrusted to our hands, "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." Why then should the faithful minister despair of being enabled to say what Baxter has recorded of his parish: "When I came thither first, there was about one family in a street that worshipped God and called upon his name, and when I came away, there were some streets where there was not past one family in the side of a street that did not so; and that did not, by professing serious godliness, give us hopes of their sincerity: and those families which were the worst, keeping inns and ale-houses, usually some persons in each house did seem to be religious. Though our administration of the Lord's supper was so ordered as displeased many, and the far greater part kept away themselves, yet we had 600 that were communicants, of whom there were not twelve that I had not good hope of," &c. &c.* Every neighbourhood will still shew instances of the like effects following the like means; and if these means were universal, so also would the effects be. "The harvest truly is plenteous." I am acquainted with a parish, (and the instance is very far from

* Life and Times. Book 1. p. 1.

singular) in which within a few years out of 204 adults, 83 have become communicants: and out of 60 houses or families, 49 use regular domestic prayer with reading of Scripture: whilst in 16 of the remaining 41 the practice is chiefly prevented by the want of an inmate who can read.

Many, when they find gross ignorance or gross vice generally existing, abandon the case as hopeless: whereas these evils ought to stimulate to greater exertion, and to the introduction of plans suited to the circumstances: for no plan can be laid down which shall be adapted to every case, though every case will admit its own, if diligently inquired into. Baxter mentions amongst the advantages which assisted him, "the zeal and diligence of the godly people of the place; who thirsted after the salvation of their neighbours, and were in private his assistants, and being dispersed throughout the town, were ready in almost all companies to repress seducing words, and to justify godliness, and convince, reprove, exhort men according to their needs: as also to teach them how to pray, and to sanctify the Lord's Day; for those people that had none in their families who could pray or repeat the sermons, went to their next neighbour's house who could do it, and joined with them."

Both Scripture, therefore, and experience, fully warrant the expectation of success in our ministry, "not only in the way of outward reformation, but in a spiritual change, and of progressive and universal influence over the heart, life, and conduct. The fruit of ministerial labours is not indeed always visible in its symptoms, nor immediate in its results. Faith and patience will be exercised; sometimes severely so. But after a pain-taking, weeping seed-time, we may expect to bring our sheaves with rejoicing, and lay them upon the altar of God."*

Nothing is more likely to prevent those exertions from being attempted which can alone produce effectual and permanent results, than the frequent removal of a minister from place

* Bridges on the Christian Ministry, p. 9, a work remarkably calculated to contribute towards the effects here anticipated.

to place, or the expectation of such removal. Knowing, and deeply lamenting, the very inadequate remuneration for their laborious services which belongs to the majority of the Clergy in the diocese of Chester,—I cannot hope that they should not frequently look for change of situation. But there is one cause of uncertainty which is greatly to be deprecated, when a clergyman residing on another benefice accepts a second, in the idea perhaps that hereafter it may become convenient to him, though the whole profits must legally be assigned to his substitute. This not only keeps the parish in uncertainty with respect to their minister, and the minister with respect to his people, which is no small practical misfortune; but it is a *continued obstacle to the improvement of the benefice*. It may be worth while for an Incumbent, or his friends to add to the endowment of a living of small value, when for every £200 the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty will grant a like sum. But of course he who does this, or for whom it is done, must be the *Incumbent*. A parsonage house, when wanting, may be provided in the same way, and I am happy to know of several cases where this has been effected *by parishioners*. But no parishioners will make such an outlay for one, however they may value him, whose tenure is so precarious as that of a Curate. And thus the parish remains permanently deprived of the greatest blessing it can enjoy, a ministers' actual residence among his people.

I hope that these will be considered as sufficient reasons, why I must not be expected to *encourage* pluralities of the nature to which I have been alluding. On the other hand, to the building of parsonage houses I shall be happy to offer any assistance in my power: and I take the opportunity of reminding the many valuable persons who wish well to the Church and to the people of this county, that there are few objects to which they can direct their liberality with greater prospect of permanent benefit.

CHESTER:

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J. H. 1830

**PRIMARY PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIANITY AND
THE CHURCH :**

A CHARGE

DELIVERED

TO THE CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF SALISBURY

IN THE SUMMER OF 1829,

AT THE

Triennial Visitation of the Diocese.

BY

THOMAS BURGESS, D.D. F.R.S. F.A.S. P.R.S.L.

BISHOP OF SARUM.

Salisbury :

PRINTED AND SOLD BY W. B. BRODIE AND CO.

**SOLD ALSO BY MESSRS. RIVINGTON, WATERLOO PLACE; AND
HATCHARD AND SON, PICCADILLY.**

1829.



TO THE REVEREND
THE CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF SALISBURY,
THE
FOLLOWING CHARGE.

PRINTED AT THEIR REQUEST,

IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED,

BY THEIR FAITHFUL FRIEND AND BROTHER,

T. SARUM.

***.* *The Appendix referred to in the Notes will
be published separately.***

A CHARGE.

REVEREND BRETHREN,

THE foundations of the faith, which we profess, and the constitution of the Church of which we are members, are at all times objects of important interest, but never more important than in periods, when men are given to change. All human institutions are liable to error, and to deterioration ; but we have happily a standard in the doctrine of Scripture, in Apostolical example, and in the practice of the primitive Church, by which the corruptions of time, of superstition, and impiety, may be recalled to primary principles. It was the highest praise of our own Church, that in completing the great

work of the Reformation in the sixteenth century, our Reformers admitted nothing new, nothing of their own, nothing that had not the authority of the best ages of the Church.* If deviations from the established laws of the Church break in upon the religious principles of the Reformation, it should make us the more jealous of the grounds of our Protestant faith, and the more careful to maintain them by diligence in duties, by the soundness of our doctrine, and the evangelical spirit of our example.

A Protestant community (thank God) we still are, (though a breach has unhappily been made in the Protestant Constitution of our Country,) a very great majority of our countrymen in Great Britain adhering to the religious principles of the Reformation; and

* This was the character which Grotius gave of the Reformation in England: "In Anglia vides quam bene processerit dogmatum noxiorum repurgatio, hac maxime de causa, quod qui id sanctissimum negotium procurandum susceperere, nihil admiserint novi, nihil sui, sed ad meliora seecula intentam habuere oculorum aciem." (Epist. ad Joann. Corvinum Parisiis anno 1638. Quoted in Le Clerc's Appendix to his ed. of Grotius De Veritate Rel. Ch.

the Law still excluding Papists from the Throne, from a few great offices of State, and from the Ministry of our Church :—a breach, I say, *unhappily* made, because it has given the appearance of a legislative sanction to a foreign authority in this country, which we are daily called upon to swear does not exist, and ought not to exist ; and to those anti-christian errors in religion, which we renounced at the Reformation. This apparent recognition, by Parliament, of a foreign authority superior to the sovereignty of the realm, and the inconsistency which it appears to have created between our religious and political duty, have excited not a little uneasiness in the minds of some conscientious Clergymen. I am, however, assured, by a very high legal authority, that the late Act must not be considered as a legislative recognition* of the Pope's supre-

* Quakers profess to believe, that it is contrary to their Christian duty to take any oath ; and they are accordingly exempted by law from so doing. But that law, in thus yielding to their scruples, does not recognize the doctrine of quakers. But

macy, but as a charitable concession to the scruples of that portion of our fellow-countrymen, who profess (however erroneously) to believe, that it is contrary to their religion to acknowledge the King's Supremacy over the state ecclesiastical in his own dominions. This persuasion *we* know to be unfounded both in Scripture and reason ; and it will be our duty now, more than ever, to shew the unscriptural and irrational character of this persuasion, so that the unlearned and uninquiring part of our Congregations be not misled into such a misconstruction of the late Act of Parliament, as may be favourable to the increase of Popery.

The change which has been made by this Act in the public law of the land, in its relation to those securities, which our ancestors held to be indispensable for the maintenance of the

there is this very material difference between the two cases : a Quaker's objection to all oaths is unconnected with any principles that are hostile to our Church or State. But a Papist's objection to the oath of ecclesiastical supremacy, is grounded on principles subversive of our Protestant Establishment both in Church and State.

Established Church, and of the true profession of the Gospel ; and as preservatives against the return of those corruptions of religion, in doctrine and discipline, which were introduced into this country by its connection with the Church of Rome, makes it necessary for a Protestant Clergy, and their Congregations, to bear in mind what is meant by *the Church*, and by the *true profession* of the Gospel, and by those *corruptions of religion*, which are most opposed to it.

Having on a former occasion taken some pains to shew, that the Church of Christ was not founded on St. Peter, but on the doctrine, which he confessed ;—the doctrine, which had been predicted by the Prophets, and was preached by the Apostles ;—and that St. Peter, so far from being the Rock, or foundation, on which the Church was built, was one of “ the living stones,” of which the superstructure was composed ; and that the *confession* of St. Peter, and *not* the Church, was that against which Christ promised, that the gates of hell should not prevail ; I shall say a very few words on the pretended infal-

libility of that Church, derived from the passage of St. Matthew, which relates to our Saviour's promise. The Church of Rome most erroneously, as well as presumptuously appropriates to herself the term *my Church*, and then concludes, that the Church of Rome was never to err, but to be *incapable of error*; not perceiving, that if exemption from error had been promised to the Church, it must have belonged to *the whole Church of Christ*, which, by making every branch of the Church as well as that of Rome, infallible, would effectually prove the fallibility of the Church of Rome.

As little pretension has that Church to the arrogant title of *Mistress of all Churches*, which yet is sworn to as an article of Faith. Every one knows, that the Churches of Jerusalem, Antioch, Corinth, and other Eastern Churches, were established before there was any Church at Rome; and that the first general Council * of the Christian Church established the ancient rights and privileges of all Churches, and the independence of the

* See Gricr's Epitome of the General Councils, p. 46.

Metropolitan Sees on each other. In our own country a Christian Church was in existence before the Church of Rome had any œcumenical authority. When Gregory sent Austin and his fellow missionaries to this country at the end of the sixth century, he found here a Church, and a hierarchy, which refused to acknowledge any foreign supremacy. And more than two centuries before that time British Bishops, representatives of the Church in these Islands, were present at Arles and Ariminum, convened not by the Bishop of Rome, but by the Emperor. The ecclesiastical supremacy of a British Prince over his subjects was acknowledged by a Pope of the second century, if we may credit some of our most ancient annalists. Into the historical accuracy of this tradition we need not here inquire. I mention it only on account of the memorable influence, which it had on a Romish Prelate in Ireland, Archbishop Browne, at the commencement of the Reformation, in deciding his submission to the King's supremacy. " He pleaded (says " Leland) the authority of the Popes them-

“ selves against the usurpation of Rome.
 “ They had acknowledged Emperors, Kings,
 “ and Princes (he observed) to be supreme
 “ in their own dominions, and even to be
 “ Christ’s Vicars on earth. So that in as-
 “ serting the King’s supremacy he claimed
 “ no more than what Eleutherius, Bishop of
 “ Rome, had granted to Lucius, first Chris-
 “ tian King * of the Britons. He, therefore,
 “ declared that he freely and conscientiously
 “ accepted the King’s highness as supreme
 “ in both realms, in ecclesiastical as well as
 “ civil affairs ; and concluding with an argu-
 “ ment still more confounding, pronounced
 “ those, who made any difficulty of concur-
 “ ring with him, to have no right† to be re-
 “ garded or treated as loyal subjects.”‡

* Perhaps a Regulus in the north of the Island, among the
Britannorum inaccessa Romanis loca, Christo vero subdita, men-
 tioned by Tertullian, who was a contemporary of that period.
 (Adv. Judæos, c. vii.)

† Almost in the words of Sir William Blackstone, who says
 of our modern recusants, “ While they acknowledge a foreign
 “ power superior to the sovereignty of the kingdom, they can-
 “ not complain, if the laws of the land will not put them upon
 “ the footing of good subjects.” (Comm. B. iv. ch. 4. § 3.)

‡ Leland’s History of Ireland, vol. ii. p. 166.

In England, at the same period, the whole body of the Clergy being threatened with the pains and penalties of a *præmunire*, made their submission to the King by acknowledging him to be the *supreme head of the Church and Clergy of England*. This subjection to their natural Sovereign the Roman Catholics of these Islands have now renounced for more than two centuries, considering it as an article of their religion to believe, that the head of the Church of Rome is the head of the Church of England; and with this false pretence on the ground of religion,—with this open declaration against the independence of our Church, our Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen claimed, and have obtained a dispensation from a constitutional law of the Reformation and Revolution; and are empowered by the late Act to legislate for the Church of England, which, by the principles and Canons and Bulls of the Papacy, they declare to be no Church, her Clergy to be no Clergy, her doctrines to be heretical, and her functions, rites, and ordinances to be null and

void. How men of such contrary principles, and such irreconcilable interests, can sit and vote in the same national Council with advantage or safety to a Protestant Church, is a problem now thought right to be determined by experience against experience.

The Church of Rome claims not only a supremacy over the Church of England, but a prior right to our Churches; for her *antiquity* is also a part of her religion, it being an article of the Papal faith, that the Church of Rome is not only the Mistress but the *Mother* of all Churches. They assert, therefore, *their* religion to be the *ancient* religion of our Country, an assertion, which I have already shewn to be contrary to Scripture and to history. This pretended antiquity, however, has made many converts to Popery. It has had its weight even on some pious Protestants, who ought to have been better informed, than to admit, that the Church of England had its origin at the æra of the Reformation, though the Church of England is the Church of the British Islands, which has subsisted under

its various titles of British, Anglo-Saxon, Norman, and English, from its first plantation by some of the Apostles ; which, after its sufferings under the Dioclesian persecution, was established in the fourth century by a native of Britain,*—by him, who, at the death of his Father, Constantius, at York, was saluted Emperor by the Roman Army in Britain ; who not only established Christianity as the religion of the Empire, but made the first laws of mortmain for its support, and authorized the bequeathing of property to the Church ; by whom, and not by any Pope, that Council was convened at Arles, at which three British Bishops were present.

Its origin from the Apostles is attested by Eusebius ; and that the Gospel was preached in Britain by St. Paul we learn from the combined testimony of Venantius, Theodoret, Jerome, and Clemens Romanus, his fellow-labourer, who affirm, that he went from Rome to Spain, and other nations in the

* According to our two most learned antiquaries, Camden and Usher.

west,—*imò ab Oceano usque ad Oceanum*,—and to the utmost bounds of the West; which he could not do without going to Britain, the *atq̃ua Occidentis insula*. St. Paul's ~~western~~ journey, after his liberation from his first imprisonment at Rome, followed naturally from the completion of his labours in the *East*, where, (as he says in his Epistle to his Roman Converts) "having "now no more place in these parts"—no more Churches to establish—his views were turned to Spain and Italy, which "for "many years he had a great desire to visit," and to places, where "Christ had not yet "been named;" for he was unwilling to build on another man's labours. And when, at Rome, the Lord "stood by him and "strengthened him that *all* the Gentiles "might hear;"* (and had been before commanded, that he "should be for salvation to "the ends of the earth;")† the *East* being at that time occupied by the other Apostles, he had a new career of Apostolical labours

* 2 Tim. iv. 17.

† Acts xiii. 47.

opened to him; in the ~~West~~, which (to him so commissioned) could be bounded by nothing short of the extremity of the West, where Britain was become a celebrated and much frequented Province of the Roman Empire. The Church of England, then, is the same British Church that had its Apostolical origin in the first century, its *Britannorum inaccessa Romanis loca*, *Christo vero subdita* in the second, its Martyrs in the third, its Bishops in the fourth, its Metropolitans and Historians in the sixth, its opponents of Image-worship in the eighth, and of Transubstantiation in the tenth. But why do we lay any stress on these remote antiquities? Because the truth of history, and of Christianity, appears to require it; and because our neglect, or ignorance, of them is abused to the detriment of our Church, and to the perversion of unwary Protestants.

The plea, then, of *antiquity*, on which Roman Catholics claim a prior right to our Protestant Churches, is as groundless and nugatory, as their religious plea, on which they claim a dispensation from our Protes-

tant laws, is unscriptural and irrational. But this latter plea has been conceded to them. The oath of ecclesiastical supremacy is dispensed with, because Roman Catholics affirm it to be *contrary to their religion*; (though their claim was advocated altogether as a question of *civil policy*;) and it concerns us, therefore, as Christians and Protestants, to shew, not only that their religion is not the ancient religion of these Islands, as I have before briefly stated, but that (as far as it differs from our own) it is not the religion of the Gospel.

Idolatry is not the religion of the Gospel; but Idolatry is the practice of their Church in the worship of bread, of Angels, and Saints. The late *repeal* of the declaration against Popery, which, for a century and a half had excluded Papists from Parliament, does not *disprove* the Idolatry and Superstition of the Church of Rome; nor does it invalidate the force and truth of that testimony against Popery, which the Legislature has most solemnly and unequivocally expressed for the last one hundred and fifty

years. I need not stay to prove the self-evident truth, that an idolatrous worship is Idolatry ; or that a Church addicted to such worship is idolatrous ; or that its members, in every idolatrous act, which they perform, are idolaters ; but it may not be unuseful to say a few words on that idolatrous doctrine, which our Protestant martyrs, holy, virtuous, and learned as they were, chose to suffer the cruellest of all deaths, rather than acknowledge ; but which the late Act has (I will not say recognized, but) countenanced, because Roman Catholics, in spite of Scripture and reason, will continue to profess it.

As Protestant Ministers, we declare with our Church, that the adoration of the Host is Idolatry “ to be abhorred of all faithful “ Christians.”* When Christ himself uttered the words, “ *This* is my Body,” and “ *This* is my blood of the New Testament,” if no change took place in the Sacramental elements, and they continued to be bread and

* Declaration after the Rubrick to the Communion Service.

wine, as our Church believes, and as the Great Council of the Nation has, for so many years, solemnly and unequivocally declared, then the worship of these elements must be idolatry. And that no change did take place, we are sure from the language of the Gospel. For when Christ said “ *This* “ is my blood of the New Testament,” he added : “ I will drink no more of *this fruit* “ *of the Vine.*” The wine, therefore, after the words of consecration, continued still to be unchanged, untransubstantiated element. If his disciples were offended on a former occasion, when they said, “ Will he give us “ his flesh to eat ?” how much more would they, who were forbidden by the law of Moses * to “ eat flesh with the life thereof, “ which is the blood ;” and even after the institution of the Sacrament, were directed by Apostolical injunction to abstain from blood ; † have been offended, if they had been commanded either while he was on earth, or afterwards, to eat the real, natural

* Gen. ix. 4.

† Acts xv. 20.

flesh with the blood of Christ? And as Christ partook of the bread and the wine,—if they had been changed into his own flesh and blood, he must,—but I forbear to add the consequence.*

To eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ, is to exercise a sincere and cordial act of faith in the death and sufferings of Christ. It is thus his flesh and blood are as truly received by faith and by the heart, as bread and wine are actually received, and confession made, by the mouth. It is by faith alone, that we partake of Christ, by faith and obedience alone we are one with Christ.† And it is in this sense only, that in our Church Catechism we say, that the body and blood of Christ are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper.

We believe, with the Scripture and our Liturgy, that Christ's natural body is in heaven, and not on earth, and that it is "contrary to the truth of Christ's natural

* See the Note subjoined to this Charge.

† 1 John iv. 15. John xvii. 20, 21. xiv, 23.

body to be at one time in more places than one.”* But the Church of Rome professes to believe, that Christ’s natural body is whole and entire in all and every one of thousands of wafers at one and the same time. The Church of Rome professes to believe, that in every wafer is contained, whole and entire,† not only the natural body, but the Deity of Christ,—his infinite and omnipresent Deity.‡ But the Deity of the Son is inseparable from that of the Father and of the Holy Spirit. In every wafer, therefore, *according to their doctrine*, must be contained, not only the natural body, with the infinite Deity of Christ, but the Deity also of the Father and the Holy Spirit. If, then, the Sacramental terms “take, eat, “this is my body,” be understood in their real, natural, corporeal sense, what a complication of impieties results from the Romish doctrine of the Eucharist.

* Declaration quoted p. 14.

† Concilii Tridentini Sessio xlii. Cap. viii. Can. 1. 2. p. 83. ed. Venet. 1813.

‡ Corpus & sanguinem una cum anima et Divinitate Domini nostri, Jesu Christi, et proinde totum Christum. Can. I.

Mistaken, then, as the Church of Rome evidently is in her interpretation of Scripture, and representation of antiquity, every one of the enormous *errors*, which I have noticed, ought to have the effect of emancipating the mind of any educated person from that bondage of pretended *infallibility*, by which her adherents are enslaved to Idolatry and Superstition, “to blasphemous fables, and dangerous deceits.”* And can it be our Christian duty (as we have been told) in any way to countenance, to authorize, to advance the interests of a Church, which, in its principles and practice, is in so many respects contrary to Scripture and to religious, civil, and intellectual liberty?

Popery professes to believe that there is only one God, but contradicts the doctrine by her polytheistic worship of Angels, Saints, and earthly elements. Popery professes to receive the Scriptures, as the standard of her faith, but makes them of no effect by her unwritten traditions. If the

* Articles of the Church of England (xxxi.)

Church of Rome received the Scriptures as the sole standard of their faith, they would believe, that Christ is the only mediator between God and man, instead of having as many mediators as there are Saints in their Calendar; they would have been thankful for the one oblation of himself, which Christ once offered on the Cross, and not have invented a new sacrifice, a daily offering up of the body of Christ, which is now in heaven, and will continue there till his second coming to judge the world; and would have remembered that to obey is better than sacrifice; and that the true sacrifice of God is a broken spirit, a thankful heart, and an obedient life,

Next to Popery, Unitarianism is the greatest enemy of the Gospel. Unitarianism has not, indeed, the Idolatry and Superstition of Popery; nor any unbritish, unnational, unprotestant connection with a foreign Church, But it is more *directly* adverse to Christianity by its denial of the supreme Divinity of Christ, the personality of the Holy Spirit, and the union of the Three

Divine Persons in one God, in opposition to the plainest circumstantial and literal testimony of the Scriptures. Unitarians do not deny the Resurrection of Christ. It was not, I believe, ever denied in any of the most heretical periods of the Christian Church. And it is a *fact*, on the ground of which alone they ought to admit the truth of the other great doctrines of Christianity, which they deny. For to this fact, before it came to pass, Christ directed the attention of his disciples,* as the test of his divine mission, as the evidence of the truth of his being “he that should come into the world,”—the Messiah predicted by the Prophets. The Jews, who had been accustomed to hear the Messiah described in the Scriptures of the Prophets, as “God with us,” and “the mighty God,” when Christ called himself the Messiah, the Son of God, and one with God, charged him with blasphemy, for “making himself God,” and “equal with God,” and thus declared their own sense of the prophetic character of the Messiah, and at the

* John xiv. 29.

same time attested Christ's declaration of himself. With his Resurrection Christ connected a proof of his Divine Omnipotence : " I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it up." " Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." Of the truth of Christ's Resurrection we have the indisputable testimony of the first Christian jury,—the twelve Apostles—Matthias being appointed with the eleven to be a witness with them of Christ's resurrection. Of this all-important fact the Apostles instituted a memorial in that weekly commemoration of it on the first day of the Jewish week, in which Christ rose from the dead. Christ having risen from the dead on the first day of the Jewish week, every seventh day in perpetual succession from it became the Christian Sabbath in commemoration and honour of Him, who declared himself to be Lord of the Sabbath. The clearest literal evidence of Christ's Divinity we have in the first verse of St. John's Gospel, and in the 13th verse of the second Chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to Titus.

Of the great doctrine of the unity of three Divine Persons in one God, the circumstantial evidence is in their equal possession of the attribute of omnipresence,—their filling universal space at one and the same time. The unity of the Three Divine Persons follows also necessarily from Christ's declaration of his unity with the Father: "I and my Father are one,"—one not in will only, but in nature and substance, as this passage is interpreted by the most learned of the ancient Fathers.* For as the Son is of the same Divine nature with the Father, and as the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of both, it follows that all Three are One, one in nature, but three in Person. Of their distinct personality it is sufficient to mention as proofs, the promise of our Saviour: "that when the Comforter is come, who I will send unto you from the Father:"—and the words of St. Peter at the commencement of his first

* Tertullian adv. Prax. c. 8. 22. 25. Cyrilli Hierosol. Catech. xi. 16. Athenasius, passim. Of the modern defenders of this ancient interpretation see Lampe and Tittmann quoted by Bloomfield in his *Recensio Synopt.* vol. iii. p. 409, 410.

Epistle : “ Elect according to the foreknowledge of the Father through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ ;”—and of St. Paul in his Epistle to the Ephesians : “ Through whom we have access by one Spirit unto the Father.”

The literal evidence of the unity of the Three Divine Persons in one God we have in the well known passage of St. John's first Epistle, if it be a genuine passage of Scripture, which, after much diligent inquiry, I believe it to be. And I am the more desirous of giving my reason for this persuasion, because if we believe the verse to be a genuine text of Scripture, it is, as a part of the revealed word of God, of inestimable value, which we are not at liberty to reject in courtesy to those, who think otherwise, even though the doctrines, which it contains, may be proved from many other passages of Scripture ; or though our contention for it should be misconstrued into a conviction of the absence of other proofs. If for want of St. John's original autograph,

absolute certainty is not in this case attainable, we may well be content with the highest degree of probability, which the case will bear, and with any preponderance of probable evidence in its favour.

The first general ground of probability is that its genuineness was never disputed before the sixteenth century. During the long period of differences between the Greek and Latin Churches, the Latin Church, though it made frequent use of the Verse in opposition to the Greek heretics, Sabellius and Arius, and their followers, was never charged with corrupting or interpolating the text.

You are aware that the main objection to the Verse is its absence from the *most ancient* Greek manuscripts *now extant*;—that there are only *two* Greek MSS. remaining of the first *eight centuries*;—and that the highest date assigned to them is the end of the fourth century. The second ground of probability, therefore, in favour of the Verse is, that there is *no Greek* evidence against it during the *first four centuries*; and that in the same period there is *much direct Latin evidence* for it in the most ancient

Version of the New Testament, namely, the old Latin, preserved in the writings of the Latin Fathers, and in Jerome's Version reformed from the Greek MSS. of his age ; beside evident allusions to the Verse in the writings of the Greek Fathers, Basil and Gregory Nazienzen of the fourth century ; and apparently in passages of Athonegorus, Clemens Alexandrinus, and Theophilus, of the second century.

Another ground of probability consists in the paucity of Greek MSS. in the *second four centuries*, omitting the verse, there being only *two* prior to the ninth century, opposed to an abundance of Latin testimonies in the same period, which cite the Verse,* and to one express appeal to Greek MSS. of the same period by the author of the Prologue to the Canonical Epistles, which in the ninth century was ascribed to Jerome, and therefore, if not written by Jerome, is at least a work of great antiquity and of proportionable authority for the existence of Greek MSS. of St. John's Epistle, which contained the Verse.

* Eucherius, Victor Vitensis, Cassiodorus, Fulgentius, &c.

In the course of the next seven centuries preceding the sixteenth we find the Greek text of the Verse quoted in the Greek Acts of the Fourth Lateran Council in the thirteenth century, by Calecas in the fourteenth, by Bryennus in the fifteenth. Of the fifteenth century, at the latest, we have also now extant two Greek MSS. the Dublin and the Vatican containing the Verse.

Besides these Greek authorities for the Verse, another probability arises for its existence in the *Princeps Editio* of the New Testament, which was printed from MSS. and therefore, in common critical justice, must be considered as equivalent to a manuscript.

It will not lessen the effect of these evidences in favour of the Verse, to add that it was pronounced to be genuine by Gerhardus, Hammond, Bull, Grabe, Mill, Bengelius, and Bishop Horsley. With these probabilities, then, in its favour, which the Verse appears to possess, and with the learned authorities, which we have in its support, it may be a matter of surprise with persons unacquainted

with the controversy, that our greatest philosopher, and one of our most celebrated Greek scholars, should have given their decided opinion against the authority of the Verse. It may therefore be not uninteresting to state for each the strongest reasons, which, respectively, influenced them in forming their opinion. The latter of these eminent opponents* of the Verse alleges as his “strongest proof, that the verse is spurious,” the absence of the Verse in Leo’s Epistle to Flavianus on the *Incarnation*, that is, on a subject, in which the seventh Verse would have been foreign to his purpose. This strongest proof therefore is no proof at all. Our great Philosopher† thought the well known passages of Cyprian “so apposite to the testimony of the Three in Heaven,” that he says he “never should have suspected any mistake in it,” but for the supposed ignorance of the verse in the next age after Cyprian. This supposition

* Porson’s Letters p. 378.

† Isaac Newton’s Opera ed. Horsley, Vol. 5. p. 497.

that the fourth century was ignorant of the Verse, arose chiefly from Augustine's mystical interpretation of the eighth verse, and from the conclusion thence drawn, that Augustine would not have applied the eighth verse to the Trinity, if he had been acquainted with the seventh. Of the fallacy of this conclusion, there can no longer be any doubt, not only because the Archbishop of Cherson, who is a defender of the seventh verse, is also an allegorical expositor of the eighth, in Augustine's sense of it ; but because the supposition arose from inattention to the manner, in which Augustine introduces his interpretation, and to the reason, which he assigns for it.

We now know that the verse was extant not only in the old Latin Version, which was in use before the time of Jerome ; but that both the seventh and eighth verses are read in Jerome's version. Sir Isaac's Tract was written before he had any knowledge of Jerome's genuine Version, or of Mill's elaborate inquiries into the text of the New Testament. Jerome's genuine Version alone would have

been sufficient to remove the objection arising from the supposed ignorance of the verse in the next age after Cyprian, and would have reconciled him to the appositeness of that passage in which the last clause of the verse is quoted as the words of Scripture; especially if he had been aware of what we now learn from Vallarsius, the last Editor of Jerome's works, namely, that the most ancient MSS. of that Version have both verses, and, that of those MSS. one of the most ancient omits the eighth verse, but contains the seventh. It should likewise be observed, in justice to our great Philosopher, that his Tract was not only written before the publication of Mill's Edition of the New Testament, but that it was a posthumous work, and not published till nearly half a century after his death.

The whole of the objections to the verse being entirely negative, may be classed with one or other of the two strongest which I have noticed, and are either unfounded like that which relates to the supposed ignorance of the verse in the age next after Cyprian,

or may be easily accounted for, as the absence of the verse in Leo's Epistle to Flavianus.

It is therefore, I think, not unreasonable to conclude, on the authority of the MSS. from which the Princeps edition of the New Testament was published ;—from the evidence of MSS. now extant, and written before the 16th century,—and from the MSS. extant and appealed to in the ninth century :—from the Latin Fathers of the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries, who were learned in the Greek language ;—and from the Latin Version of Jerome formed on Greek MSS. and the older Latin, which was in use before his time ; both which Versions are more ancient than any Greek MS. now extant : I say, from such a series and union of evidences, it is not unreasonable to conclude, that the controverted verse is a genuine text of Scripture ; a text most interesting to us in its combined relations to the Divinity, Humanity, and Death of Christ —a death which, while, by its all-sufficient merits, it atones for our repeated sins, dis-

charges us from no moral obligation of the old law, but, by its submission to Divine Justice, affords an example of obedience, which constrains us to the duties of patient suffering, humility, forgiveness, and love both to God and man. “ Though he were a Son, “ yet learned he obedience by the things “ which he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the Author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him.”

The life of Christ was a life of obedience and active beneficence. He came “ not to destroy the law, but to fulfil ;” and “ he left us an example that we should follow his steps.” He said, “ My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.” We love God because he first loved us ; and we *show* our love to God by keeping his commandments. We have, therefore, neither love of God, nor faith in him without obedience. Christ said “ If thou wouldst enter into life, keep the commandments :” thus confirming the whole moral law. To the question, “ Good Master what must I do to inherit eternal life ?” Jesus answered,

“Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother.” The omission here of the *tenth* commandment of the *second* table, and the *fourth* commandment of the *first* table does not abrogate the prohibition against *covetousness*, nor the injunction for the observance of the *Sabbath*, any more than the omission of the three other commandments of the first table does away the prohibition against *idolatry*, and the *irreverent use of* the name of God.

“Do we make void the law through faith?” (said St. Paul) “God forbid: yea, we establish the law.” The moral law was established by Christ and his Apostles in the principle of faith. “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” “He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar.”* Obedience is inseparable from the faith, that justifies and saves. St. Peter expresses the union of faith and obedience in the remarkable passage, which

* 1 John ii. 4. iv. 20.

I have before quoted, in which he calls *them*, to whom he addresses himself, “elect according to the foreknowledge of God,” [not unconditionally, but] “through sanctification of the Spirit unto *obedience* and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ:” that is, elect unto obedience and [its consequence] salvation through the death of Christ. For “he is the author of salvation to them only, who obey him.” We are justified by faith *apart* from works, but not without them: *χωρις εργαων* but not *ανευ εργαων*. For though faith may, abstractedly considered, be said to justify without works, because our best works cannot put away a single sin, yet justified persons are never without works of repentance, hope, fear, and love of God, and submission to the Gospel covenant.

But that I may not detain you longer on a subject, on which I have before discoursed with you at large, I will conclude what I proposed to say on it, with some passages of the Gospel, which shew Christ’s special favour to moral obedience. “If a man love

me, he will keep my commandments, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.”* On another occasion our Saviour said, “Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and my mother.”† This union of faith and obedience is that fellowship with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ, to which St. John invited those, to whom he addressed his First Epistle, when he said, “That, which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ?”‡

The faith, which St. Paul required, was not a mere enthusiastic intensity of belief and recumbency of mind on Christ, but a belief of the substantial facts of the Gospel, especially the death and resurrection of Christ. “The righteousness, which is of faith, speaketh on this wise :—If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt

* John xiv. 23.

† Mark iii. 35.

‡ 1 John i. 3.

“ believe in thine heart, that God raised
 “ him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”*
 If then any one have this faith, and it be
 “ the faith that worketh by love,”—that
 “ love which fulfilleth the law,”—he need not
 disturb himself by the apparent contradic-
 tions, which verbally divide the disputants
 on the subject of justification among the
 members of our Church.

The dispute assumes a different form,
 when the comparison is between the doc-
 trines of Rome, of Geneva, and England;—
 between different branches of the Reformed
 Church, or between any one of them and
 the Church of Rome;—between Congrega-
 tions, which differ from each other only,
 or chiefly, in form and discipline, or between
 them and a Church which assumes to itself
 exclusively the title of *the Church*, and de-
 nies it to all others, holding them to be
 excluded altogether from the communion of
 the Christian Church, and from the pale of
 salvation. It concerns us therefore to know,

* Rom. x. 6, 9.

what is meant by *the Church* in its origin and form or structure, and what constitutes the specific and essential character of *the true Church* of Christ.

As St. Paul founded the Church of Corinth, so St. Peter did that of Antioch. He founded it on the predictions of the Prophets, and his own preaching, but chiefly on the miracles and ministry of Jesus Christ. The Church of Antioch was founded by St. Peter, not *on* him, individually; much less was the Church of Rome. That Church was founded neither by him, nor on him. That no Apostle had preached the Gospel at Rome, when St. Paul wrote his Epistle to the Romans, we have proof from two passages of that Epistle, in one of which he says, “I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, to the end, ye may be established.”* He would not have said this, if the Romans had been disciples of any other Apostle; for he says in another passage:† “Yea so

* Rom. i. 11.

† Rom. xv. 20.

have I strived to preach the Gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation." The foundation, therefore, of the Church of Rome was laid by St Paul; and laid not on St. Peter, but on Christ.

So vain and visionary are the pretensions of the Church of Rome to her assumed supremacy over the whole Christian Church, on the ground of a misinterpreted passage of Scripture, their acceptance of which is contradicted by history and fact. Yet through this pretended supremacy are our Roman Catholic countrymen induced to adhere to a foreign ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and refuse to acknowledge the sovereignty of their King over the state ecclesiastical of his own dominions, which Scripture, reason, and the ancient laws of our country assign to him.

Equally vain are the pretensions of the Church of Rome to the titles of *the Church*, *the only true Church*, by which she pronounces the Church of England to be heretical, and cut off from the Church of Christ;

and therefore without Orders, without a Ministry, without Sacraments. Two Churches so opposite to each other, so foreign to each other in their worship and government, as the Church of England, and the Church of Rome are, cannot both be the true Church. And are there no tests of a true Church, to enable us to judge which of the two Churches is a true Church, and which is not? There must undoubtedly be such tests; and we shall probably find them in the name, origin, character, and practice of the primitive Church, which I will here endeavour briefly to detail, so as to prove the primitive and Apostolical character of one of the two Churches, and the anti-christianity of the other.

In Scripture the Church is denominated *Εκκλησία*,* an assembly or congregation; “*called*” together; a designation, which implies an existing authority to *call* or convene

* *Εκκλησία*, *cætus convocatus*. SCHLEUSNER, Lex. Vet. T. *Cætus Christianorum* Lex. Nov. T. *Convocatus populus* per ministros Ecclesiæ ab eo, qui facit unanimes habitare in domo. DUFRESNE Glossar.

an assembly. The Church, therefore, is not a self-called, but an authorized congregation. According to the same Scriptures the persons first called were the twelve Apostles, next the other Disciples, and then the three thousand converted on the day of Pentecost. This designation of the Church (ἐκκλησία) is expressed in the terms ἡ κληοις and οἱ κλητοι, which are appropriated to the *religion*, and the *members* of the Church. The Church, therefore, is an authorized and visible congregation.

The authority, which convenes, must have power to direct and govern. A Church, therefore, is a visible Congregation or Society governed by the authority which convenes it. It must consequently have laws ; (for there can be no order or government without them ;) a conformity to which must be necessary to constitute a member of the Church. The Church, therefore, is an authorized and visible Congregation, subject to certain laws and ordinances, which relate solely to a visible community.

The Church, in our northern designation

of it, takes its name from *the Lord*, in whose name we assemble, *ἐκκλησία* KYPIAKH, *kyriake*, from which the Scottish, or rather old English word *Kirk*, and the common term, *Church*, are derived. In the New Testament the *day* consecrated to *the Lord* is called *ἡμέρα* KYPIAKH. And the term which was thus at first used *appellatively*, became in process of time the *proper name* of the *day*,* and of the *congregation* assembled in the name of the Lord; and of the *building*, in which the Congregation assembled. The Church, therefore, is an assembly, or congregation *called* by *the Lord*, assembled in the name of *the Lord*, observing the ordinances of *the Lord*. The Church is therefore a visible congregation, deriving its origin, authority, government, and ordinances from the Lord. The government of the Church emanates from his authority, and can consist only with his will, as directed immediately by himself, or by his Apostles, and their Institutions.

Some very important facts follow from these premises. No one can be *called* by

* Suicer. Lex. Voce Κυριακή.

himself. No one can be of *the Church*, who is not called, or admitted, by competent authority; nor is any one in communion with the Church, who does not submit to its authority;* nor can any religious society or assembly be the Church, which is not governed by primitive and Apostolical institutions and ordinances. Of course that society or assembly alone is the Church, which derives its *authority*, and *government*, and *ordinances* from the Lord and his Apostles. And *that* only is competent authority, which has descended from Christ through his Apostles, and them, who were appointed to the government of the Church by the Apostles.

The primitive, Apostolical, and true form of Church-government may be ascertained by legitimate records. If it can be shewn that *one* form of Church-government universally prevailed in the primitive Church, and that *only one* form existed from the time of the Apostles to the sixteenth century, that must be the primitive and Apos-

* Matth. viii. 17.

tolical form;* and that, which is primitive and Apostolical, must be the true form.

If it should be asked, of what consequence is the outward form, which any religious society may assume, provided its *doctrines* are essentially Christian and Apostolical? we may answer, that every thing is of consequence, which derives its authority from Christ and his Apostles; and that whatever is contrary to Apostolical authority, is contrary to the will of Christ, and subversive of the unity of the Church;—and secondly, that the outward forms of all things are tests of their specific and constituent character, and consequently that a religious society, which has not the specific and constituent character of the Church, is not the true Church.

The outward form of every thing is its

* The judgment of a Member of the Church of Geneva, and one so learned as Le Clerc, is decisive on this subject: “ Qui sine
 “ præjudicio legerunt quod superest scriptorum Christianorum
 “ antiquissimorum, satis norunt priorem disciplinæ formam, quæ
 “ Episcopalis vocatur, qualis est in Magnæ Britanniæ parte
 “ meridiana, ubique, proximo post Apostolos sæculo, obtinuisse;
 “ unde esse institutionis Apostolicæ colligere licet.” (I. Clerici
 De eligenda inter dissentientes Christianos sententia, § xi.)

specific difference. Man, though essentially distinguished from other animals by the attribute of *reason*, is specifically distinguished by his *form*. The true Church must accordingly be distinguished from other religious societies by its *outward form*, if not by its internal principles ; because religious societies, which differ from each other, will belong to the true Church, or not, according to their constituent character.

The *outward form* of the Church is its government and ordinances ; its internal principles are faith, hope, charity, repentance, unity, conformity. How necessary a part of the true Church its outward form is, appears evidently from what our Saviour says of that Sacrament, by which we are *admitted* into the Church. “ He that believeth, and is *baptized*, shall be saved.” To be a member of the Church of Christ, he must not only believe, but he must be baptized ; he must be born not only, inwardly, of the Spirit, but outwardly of water. Cornelius had, before admission into the Church, every characteristic of the true Church, but the ex-

ternal rite. *Externals* are the *marks*, the *seals*, the *wedding garments*, the *circumcisions*, which incorporate us into the Christian profession, and bring us, by their conformity to Christ's instruction and ordinance, appropriately within his family, and under his covenanted protection.

The Scriptures being the criterion of all religious truth, the true Church must be Scriptural and Apostolical in its internal principles as well as its outward form; in other words, both in its doctrines and its discipline. If a Church be Apostolical in its discipline, and not in its doctrines, it is not the true Church; and if it be Apostolical in its doctrines and not in its discipline, it is not the true Church. Because, if the *essential* difference of any thing be separated from its *specific* difference, or vice versa, it would cease to be what it was. A Church, therefore, to be a true Church, must be Apostolical in its outward form and its internal principles—in its discipline and its doctrines.

A man's own sincerity cannot be a test of his being a member of the true Church. If

the society or congregation to which he belongs, be not apostolical in its discipline and doctrines, he is not a member of the true Church. A man may be very ignorantly right, or very sincerely wrong; but it will be better for him to be right with his ignorance, than wrong with his sincerity; better to be an ignorant believer than a sincere unbeliever. (Mark xvi. 16.)* A sincere confidence in his own judgment will not secure him from heresy; but it may lead him (if he lean entirely to his own understanding) to adopt what is most unprimitive, unapostolical, and untrue. Neither can a mistaken conscience make that not sinful which the Scriptures have made sinful. Indeed, in questions of religious truth or worship, “we have no warrant to regard conscience, which is not grounded in Scripture.†

The Church of Rome, then, which arrogates to herself the exclusive title of *the Church*, and holds all others to be excom-

* See the xviiiith Article of the Church of England.

† Milton's Treatise on True Religion. ed. Birch. p. 141.

manicate and heretical, which are not of her communion, is not the true Church. For though she has the outward form of the true Church, which prevailed throughout Christendom for the first fifteen hundred years, and is Apostolical in her origin and descent, she has not the characteristic of conformity with the doctrine, discipline, and usages of the primitive Church.

But the members of the Church of England have not *now* to seek for proofs, that the Church of Rome is not the true Church of Christ. Our Church decided this question nearly three centuries ago, by rejecting the supremacy of the Pope, with the idolatry and superstition of his Church. In the Homily on Whitsunday the judgment of our Church is thus explicitly declared: “ The
 “ true Church is an universal Congregation
 “ or fellowship of God’s faithful and elect
 “ people, built upon the foundation of the
 “ Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ him-
 “ self being the head corner-stone. And it
 “ hath always three notes or marks, whereby
 “ it is known: Pure and sound doctrine,
 “ The Sacraments ministered according to . . .

“ Christ’s holy institution, And the right use
 “ of ecclesiastical discipline. This descrip-
 “ tion of the Church is agreeable both to the
 “ Scriptures of God, and also to the doc-
 “ trines of the ancient Fathers, so that none
 “ may justly find fault therewith. Now if
 “ you will compare this with the Church of
 “ Rome, not as it was in the beginning, but
 “ as it is at present, and hath been for the
 “ space of nine hundred years and odd, you
 “ shall well perceive the state thereof to be
 “ so far wide from the nature of the true
 “ Church, that nothing can be more. For
 “ neither are they built upon the foundation
 “ of the Apostles and Prophets, retaining the
 “ sound and pure doctrine of Christ Jesus,
 “ neither yet do they order the sacraments,
 “ or else the ecclesiastical keys in such sort,
 “ as He did first institute and ordain them.

—* “ To be short, look what our Saviour
 “ Christ pronounced of the Scribes and Pha-
 “ risees in the Gospel: the same may be
 “ boldly, and with safe conscience, pro-

• The passage omitted here for brevity, is given in the
 Appendix.

“ nounced of the Bishops of Rome, namely,
 “ that they have forsaken, and daily do
 “ forsake, the commandments of God, to set
 “ up their own constitutions. Which things
 “ being true, as all they who have any light
 “ of God’s word, must needs confess, we may
 “ well conclude, according to the rule of
 “ Augustine, that the Bishops of Rome, and
 “ their adherents, are not the true Church.”

The Church of Rome was once a pure and
 Apostolical branch of the true Church, and
 might become so again by abolishing her
 many innovations in faith and worship and
 discipline. It was thus that the Church of
 England *resumed* her primitive character at
 the Reformation, not by schism and sepa-
 ration from the Church of Christ, but by
 removing from her doctrine, discipline, and
 usages every thing, that was contrary to
 Scripture, and to primitive antiquity ; in
 doing which she left no mother Church ;
 (for the Church of Rome was a foreigner and
 intruder ;) she broke no principle of Christian
 union ; (for the Church of England was never
 in any period a part of the Church of Róme ;

having been planted by some of the Apostles* long before the period of Papal jurisdiction;) and renounced no legitimate authority; for the Pope's authority had not only been refused by the Norman Princes, but was contrary to many laws which had been enacted prior to the reign of Henry VIII. We may therefore justly venerate the Church, of which we are members, as the best and purest this day in the Christian world; and we may, in the language of a great authority, "bless God, that we were born, baptized, "and bred up in her communion."*

But in return for so great a privilege, we ought to feel ourselves bound by a proportionate responsibility, to support her credit, to advance her interests, and, as far as in us lies, to preserve inviolate that religious faith, for which our martyred Reformers sacrificed their lives; and to employ our anxious soli-

* Τινας δὲ ἤδη (Μαθητάς)—ὑπὲρ τοῖς Ὀκτατοῖς παραλθὼν ἐπὶ τὰς καλουμένας Βρεττανικὰς ἡσους, Eusebii Demonstr. Evang. III. p. 112, ed. Colon.

* Bp. Bull's Letter to Mr. Nelson.

citude, that we do not in any way, by negligence in duties, or other reproachableness of conduct, weaken the attachment of our people to their Church, and give countenance to the separation of our dissenting brethren. For this purpose let us faithfully obey the Apostle's injunction, "earnestly to contend "for the faith once delivered to the saints;" and while we hold fast the faith on which the Church was built, let us cultivate the hope that sustains it, let us carefully maintain the charity that sanctifies it, and endeavour to enlarge the knowledge that adorns it. Let us study the privileges, the duties, the difficulties and dangers of the pastoral office,—difficulties and dangers, which kept alive the conscientious fears even of an Apostle, "lest, after preaching to others, he "himself should be a castaway;"—duties, which afford employment for the highest exertions of intellect, and the tenderest affections of our nature;—Gospel privileges sufficient to animate the diligence and reward the zeal of all that "endure unto the end."

We have been forewarned by Him who

could not be mistaken, that “because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold,”—the love of religion and Church-fellowship. We have heard much of the increase of crime, and we have seen that the love of many *has* waxed cold towards the Church of England, the Reformation, and the memory of the blessed Martyrs, who “loved not their lives unto death,”* but devoted them to the most painful death rather than sanction the idolatries of Popery. Would it not be a most painful consideration, if we could charge ourselves with being at all answerable for that (*disregard*, shall I call it, or) *ignorance* of the religious principles of the Reformation, which led to the late Act of Parliament, and has given to the enemies of our religion a legislative power over our Church? On the Clergy, generally, rests the education of the rising generation, both at School and at the Universities. If, then, the late legislative departure from the

* Rev. xii. 11.

fundamental laws of the Reformation has been owing to the entire exclusion of religion from the policy on which the new law has been founded, does not that appear to justify the reproach that is sometimes brought against the general course of public education in this country? If this reproach be just, it deeply concerns the Clergy to examine the grounds of the complaint, and to use their utmost endeavours for applying the remedy, which appears to be, in great measure, in *their* hands, by an improved course of study at School, and at the Universities.

When the course of academical education commonly ceases, there is a period, a most important period, of two or three years, immediately preceding the age of twenty-three, which I earnestly recommend to the attention of future Candidates for Orders, to the Parents of young men intended for the Ministry of the Church; and to the Clergy, who may be charged with the superintendence of the studies and moral habits of that most precious portion of life, which may be most usefully employed in bringing the mind to a

just apprehension of future responsibility, of the fearful necessity of “ putting on the new “ man,” of forming new habits, pursuits, and studies, and especially that most necessary and difficult study of self-knowledge, so as to prevent the painful remorse, which some conscientious Auto-biographers* have expressed on the recollection of the total want of mental and spiritual preparation with which they undertook the cure of souls,—of immortal souls,—of perishing souls,—of souls to be saved or lost, perhaps, by the faithfulness or unfaithfulness of their ministry ; and with utter thoughtlessness, perhaps ignorance, of that awful warning : “ The wicked man “ shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will “ I require at thy hands.”*

Extraordinary periods require extraordinary exertions ; and of the present period the two most prominent features are the abounding of iniquity (or as it is commonly called, the *increase of crime*) and the *increase*

* See an Extract from Scott's *Force of Truth* in the Appendix.

* Ezek. iii. 10.

of Popery. Fifty years ago, when concessions first began to be made to members of the Church of Rome, there were not seventy thousand Roman Catholics in Great Britain; at the present time their number is estimated at upwards of five hundred thousand. The 30th of Charles II. was enacted to hinder the growth of Popery; what then can be expected from the repeal of that Act, but a proportionate increase of that, which, for so many years, it contributed to restrain? Can it be doubted, that the late concession with its increased privileges of political power and influence will continue and augment the growth of Popery?

There are, however, those who think it will have a contrary effect; that conversion will follow from removed restriction; and that it will promote the reformation of religion by conciliating, harmonizing, and tranquillizing the discordances of society in Ireland; and thus make way for the circulation of the Bible, and the Book of Common Prayer, and for the co-operation of the Clergy by fulfilling the intention of

the First Canon of our Church, and of some of the occasional offices of the Liturgy, in maintaining the ecclesiastical supremacy of the King, and exposing the fallacy of the Papal pretensions to that supremacy, as well as the unscriptural and anti-christian character of the novelties and heterodoxies of the other errors, which the Church of Rome has superadded to the doctrines and usages of the primitive Church.

However this may be, one thing is certain, that a breach has been made in our Protestant Constitution, (I will not say an *irreparable** one) and the enemies of our religion have passed one of the most powerful of the once *established* barriers of our Church. At present, therefore, we can but hope, that increased means of instruction,

* A very pious writer is of opinion, that an attempt to *repeal* the late anti-protestant Act, in which *five millions* of our countrymen are interested, would shake the Empire to its centre; yet the repeal of the Protestant law of the 30 Ch. II. in which the religious interests of *fifteen millions* of our countrymen are involved, has produced no such convulsion. The repeal of the *forty-shilling freehold elective franchise* might have been expected to agitate the Irish population; but no great popular movement has followed from it.

exertion, perseverance, and example, may counteract the natural consequences of increased power and influence, may enlighten ignorance, disabuse prejudice, disarm hostility, and, under Providence, promote that reformation, which has happily begun in Ireland, and conduce to that natural, moral, and religious union, which is necessary to the happiness of both countries.

Members of the Church of Rome in this country are known to exert the utmost influence in their power to proselyte by charities and false reasonings the poor, the ignorant, and the unwary, of our Protestant community. Yet a clamour has been raised against any attempt of Protestants to proselyte the members of the Church of Rome; and Protestants have been weak enough to be deterred by such clamour from a duty, not only justified by the conduct of our enemies, but enjoined by Apostolical authority, and encouraged by the promise of an everlasting reward for converting a sinner from the error of his ways. And what errors can be more anti-christian and more dan-

gerous to salvation,* than the idolatries and other errors of Popery?

I will not close this address without once more pressing on your conscientious consideration the too general neglect of the first Canon of our Church, entitled *The King's Supremacy over the Church of England in causes ecclesiastical, to be maintained*: in which the Clergy are required four times every

• “ I am so far from thinking that Salvation is only to be
 “ found in unity with the Church of Rome, that on the contrary
 “ I verily believe they are in great danger of their Salvation,
 “ who live in her Communion; that is, who own her erroneous
 “ doctrines, and join in her corrupt worship.” Bishop BULL's
 Letter to Mr. Nelson. The Letter concludes with the following
 words: “ For these reasons laid together, I can never be
 “ induced to enter into the Communion of the Roman Church,
 “ as it now is; and for the same reasons, (to speak my mind
 “ freely,) I wonder how so learned a man as Monsieur de
 “ Meaux can, with a good and quiet conscience, continue
 “ in it.”

Dr. Jortin, speaking of Fleury's plan for reconciling Protestants to Popery, says: “ As to his polite and artful insinua-
 “ tions to reconcile us Protestants to his Church, the remarks
 “ which I have given on Ecclesiastical History, are, I conceive,
 “ a full and sufficient preservative against them. One im-
 “ portant use may be made of his discourse; it shews most
 “ evidently, the utter impossibility of any re-union between us
 “ and the Papists, even upon the more moderate plan laid

year at the least, in their Sermons and other Collations and Lectures to inculcate and maintain the King's Supremacy over the State Ecclesiastical in this Kingdom, and the abolition of all foreign power repugnant to the same."

The stated offices of our Church, which are appointed for the commemoration of the

"down by this author and by some others. Between us and them there must be for ever

"*Littora littoribus contraria, &c.*

"I shall not here go about to combat that baffled system of
 "superstition and iniquity, which hath been confuted a thousand
 "times, and which, perhaps, no author ever attacked, without
 "giving it a mortal wound. Strong, indeed, are the prejudices
 "of education, and the attachment to a Church in which we
 "were born and bred, and to the ministry of which we have
 "devoted ourselves, and candid allowances ought ever to be
 "made for them. Else it would seem impossible for a man of
 "letters, a man versed in Ecclesiastical History and in the
 "Scriptures, a man of probity and good sense, to admit the
 "Pope's spiritual authority over the Christian world, the
 "infallibility of Popes or Councils, the celebration of the
 "Eucharist in one kind, transubstantiation, celibacy imposed
 "upon the monks, the nuns, and the clergy, the worship of
 "images and reliques, the usefulness of monasteries, the mi-
 "racles ascribed to impostors, fanatics, and lunatics, and a
 "multitude of other things so contrary to religion and to com-
 "mon sense." (JORTIN'S Eccles. Hist. vol. iii. p. 208.)

arrival of King William III., and of our great national deliverance on the fifth of November; and the accession of the House of Hanover; are all intimately connected

I cannot forbear adding to this Note an important extract from Sir Humphrey Lynde's *Via Tuta*, on the differences between the two Churches, and on the safety of adhering to the Protestant Church, and the danger of continuing in the Church of Rome:

“ But admit, the Protestants should allow a possibility of salvation to all believing Christians in the bosome of the Roman Church (which never yet was granted) what doe our adversaries inferre from hence? Therefore (say they) *It is the safer way to persist in that Church, where both sides agree, than where one part stands single in opinion by themselves.* Now surely, if that bee the safer way, wherein differing parties agree both in one, I will joyne issue with them in this very poynt. And if in this I make not good (The Title of my Booke) That we are therefore in the safer way, because they agree in the principall points of controversie with our doctrine, I will reconcile myselfe to the Roman Church; and creepe upon all foure to his Holinesse for a pardon.

First then, we say, There is a Heaven and a Hell. It is true, say they; but there is a Purgatory, there is a *Limbus Infantum* also. In the first part they joyne with us, in the latter they stand single by themselves: And that is the safer way, where both sides agree.

We say, We shall be saved by the merits and satisfaction of Christ Jesus. It is true, say they; but there are likewise merites of Saints, and satisfactions of our owne, helpfull and necessary to salvation. In the first part they joyne with us, in the latter they stand single by themselves and that is the safer way, where both sides agree.

with the same Protestant subject,—the abolition of the Pope's authority and influence in this country,—and are all calculated to keep alive those Protestant and national

We say, The Sacrament of Baptisme, and the Eucharist, are two proper Sacraments instituted by Christ: It is true, say they; but there are five more to be received, as true and proper Sacraments, *de fide*, for an article of beliefe. The first two they confesse with us, in the latter five they stand single by themselves: And that is the safer way, where both sides agree.

We say that the Images of Christ and his Saints are ornaments and memorialls of the absent, and may in some cases serve for History. It is true, say they; but there is also worship and veneration due unto them. In the first part they agree with us, in the latter they stand single by themselves: And that is the safer way where both sides agree.

We say with the Evangelist: *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him onely shalt thou serve.* (Matth. iv.) It is true, say they: but there be Saints & Angels also, that are to be invocated and adored. In the first part they joyne with us, in the latter they stand single by themselves: And that is the safer way, where both sides agree.

We say, that Christ is the Mediator and Intercessor betwixt God & Man. It is true, say they: but the Saints & Angels are our Intercessors and Mediators also. In the first part they joyne with us, in the latter they stand single by themselves: And that is the safer way, where both sides agree.

We say, that Christ is the Head & Monarch of the Church. It is true, say they: but there is likewise another visible Head of the Church, which is the Pope. In the first part they joyne with us, in the latter they stand single by themselves: And that is &c.

feelings, which must ever flow from a just sense of the merciful Providence of God, and gratitude for the blessings, which we enjoy in the true profession of the Gospel,

We say, that *Peter* had a Primacy of Order, that is a Firstship among the Apostles. It is true, say they; but withall he had a supremacy of power & jurisdiction. In the first place they joyne with us, in the latter they stand single by themselves: And that is &c.

We say, there are two & twenty Bookes of Canonickall Scripture. It is true, say they; but there are other books also; as namely, *Tobit, Judith, the Maccabees, &c.* that are Canonickall. In the first part they approve all that wee hold, in the latter they stand by themselves: And that is, &c.

We say, the Scripture is the Rule of Faith. It is true, say they; but there are Traditions likewise and unwritten verities that must be added to the Scriptures. In the first part they joyne with us, in the latter they stand single by themselves. And that is, &c.

Lastly, we say there are 12 Articles of the Creed, & this is the Tenet and Confession of all Christian Churches. It is true, say they; but there are 12 Articles more, published by Pope *Pius* the Fourth, to bee received of Catholiques. In the first place they confesse all that wee hold, in the latter they stand single by themselves: And that is the safer way by our Adversarie's Confession, where both sides agree.

Thus by the ample testimonies of the best learned in the Roman Church, there is nothing taught by the Protestants *de fide*, for matter of Faith, which the Church of God hath not always held necessary to be believed; nothing but that which alone is sufficient for every Christian man to know concerning his salvation; nothing but that which is confessed by our

and in the possession of a Church reformed from the errors of Popery, and emancipated from the bondage of a foreign supremacy.

adversaries to be safe and profitable for all believers; nothing but that, whereunto the writings of all antiquitie are consonant, and all Christian confessions agreeable.

Now since I have brought you into *Via tuta, the Safe Way*; I will briefly commend unto you Christ and his Apostles for your Leaders; the ancient Fathers for your Associates and Assistants; and the blessed Spirit for your Guide and Conduct in your safe Way. There are other passengers likewise, (viz.) Cardinalls, Bishops & Schoolmen, which doe accompany you part of your way. But they are strangers, and therefore bee wary of them. And by way of prevention, *Stand in the waies, and see, and aske for the old paths, where is the good way? and ye shall finde rest for your soules. Jer. vi. 16.*" (Sir H. LYNDE's *Via Tuta*, Sect. xviii.)

Sir H. Lynde, born in 1579, Knighted in 1613, had a seat in several Parliaments, and died in 1636. His *VIA TUTA* (says Mr. Chalmers) was "reprinted several times, and translated into Latin, Dutch, and French printed at Paris in 1647 from the sixth edition."

THE END.

PRINTED BY W. B. PROBLE AND CO., CARUM.

5th. 1829.

REPORT

OF

A SERMON,

PREACHED AT THE

INDEPENDENT CHAPEL,

LINCOLN,

On Sunday Evening, June the 21st, 1829,

BY THE REV. B. BYRON.


As taken in Shorthand,

By ROBINSON TAYLOR.

Lincoln:

PRINTED BY EDWARD B. DRURY, NEXT THE BANK.

1829.





OBSERVATIONS.

CERTAIN Individuals, with a zeal worthy of a better purpose, have industriously promulgated an opinion (which they hoped would prove prejudicial to the publication of this Sermon), that the Reporter has acted either under the influence of some unkind feeling towards the REV. MR. BYRON, or has been prompted by those who have been denominated his *enemies*.

In justice to himself, the Reporter begs to state, that these misrepresentations are devoid of truth,—that in exercising his pen he has acted in compliance with the wishes expressed by a considerable number of the Reverend Gentleman's hearers. It is therefore believed that the publication of the Discourse cannot be deemed an injury to the preacher. In fact, those individuals who have been the principal cause of its appearance in print, view it as an act of justice towards the Reverend Gentleman; as a corrective of those *ex parte* statements which are calculated to produce erroneous impressions. The Reporter has no particular motive, except to exercise himself in a useful art; and he ventures to affirm that

his notes will be found a faithful record of the original Address, though the Reverend Speaker in the course his delivery, evidently laboured under great mental excitement, which occasionally rendered his voice almost inaudible at the conclusion of several of his periods.

Having thus explained, he does not hesitate to offer a hint to those who are apt to imagine deep motives in plain and simple folks :—

Believe not each aspersing tongue,
As some weak persons do,
But always feel that story wrong
Which ought not to be true.

ROBINSON TAYLOR.

Lincoln, August 1st, 1829.

Text :—2d. Epis. of Paul to Timothy, 4 Chap. 6 Verse.

“ The time of my departure is at hand.”

AND if at such a time (said the Reverend Gentleman), my feelings were not keenly excited, I must be either much more, or much less than a human being ; I must be an angel or a brute. The last time a Minister addresses his people, must under any circumstances produce solemnity of mind, and excite emotions that may be much more easily conceived than described. Most certainly must this be the case if, the last time the Minister addresses his people, he concludes a series of pastoral labors, that have been continued during a space of ten years : still more certainly must this be the case, if the Minister who thus terminates a course of labor and of christian intercourse, be the first Pastor the Church has had by whom it was organized, and by the blessing of God by whose labors it has become what it is : yet still more certainly must this be the case, if the Minister looks back on a course of service and

duty, and remembers that during that course of service and duty, the community have been exposed to dangers and difficulties; and that he himself has endured obloquy and encountered suffering, in attempting to save it from corruption and rescue it from destruction:—in the one case, it is like a father being called to separate for ever from his own offspring, and leave it unprotected in a wide world: and in the other case, it is like the master of a vessel, who, when there was a mutiny on board seized the helm and steered the vessel safely into port, notwithstanding the avowed determination of the mutineers to sink the ship, if they failed in the enterprize. Such a man could not cease to entertain a lively interest in the future history of the vessel and its crew, in which, and among whom, he encountered such perils and made such achievements. All these circumstances are well calculated to excite due solemnity in my mind on the present occasion,

I confess I never anticipated a religious service with less pleasure than the present. I never set myself more reluctantly to prepare a sermon. I never felt more at a loss to determine as in the sight of God who judges the heart,

what ought to be the topics which this discourse should embrace: my situation therefore is far from an enviable one; and yet I feel, I trust, infinite gratitude to God in the reflection, that it might have been unspeakably worse. I cannot fail to remember, that I might have terminated my pastoral course here, by an awful Apostacy from that faith which it has been my privilege to preach; or that I might have been driven away in shame, in consequence of the detection of some flagrant immorality and profligacy, which would have dispirited the friends of religion, and caused its enemies to triumph: or I might have failed in ability and usefulness and preached until there had been none to hear me: or I might have in a moment of imprudence rashly resigned the pastoral functions, and afterwards repented of what I had done, feeling that the blessing of God could not be expected on such a step, and that neither the past nor future could be contemplated without feelings of compunction. I hope I am infinitely grateful to God, though "the time of my departure is at hand," that it does not arise from any of these causes. I believe the cause of my departure is little known; it may be suspected by some, and known but by few; I am half inclined to keep

it secret, and would do so; did I not feel convinced after due contemplation, that its development may prove profitable to you, and to your future Minister whoever he may be.

My own friends in general confound two things that are distinct; the one, the cause of my departure; the other, the particular circumstances which fix the time of that departure: the cause of my departure is one thing, the circumstances which fix the time of that departure are several. It is not owing to a mercenary motive; to an eagerness to obtain a more ample remuneration for my ministerial services, though this reason has been frequently assigned by persons who are willing to be at one and the same time, the professors of the Religion of Truth, and "the shameless heralds of a lie!"—Had this been the case I had left you long ago, for I could then have effectually secured that object; had this been the case I never should have settled here, for I could have secured that object in other places: previous to taking up my residence in this City. My removal is not caused (though some persons think it is) by the goading, the harassing, the insults, the indignity, and the thorough-faced brutality

with which I was treated in the earlier years of my ministry here; by those old professors of religion who were born out of due time, flung into the world as it were, by a strange slip of nature, at least a thousand years too late; and, alas! whose ideas respecting religion, are only fit for that state of moral darkness which covered Europe during the middle Ages. Nor is the reason of my removal a spirit of discontent on account of the small success that has attended my labors amongst you; neither is my removal occasioned by any eager desire to find myself surrounded by a more numerous, admiring and respectable auditory. No one of these, nor all combined, have caused me to determine to take my departure. It arises from one simple cause, which I regret ever should have existed, more especially as it is the means of separating me from those whom I esteem, and trust I ever shall. The simple cause of my departure, is in consequence of an apparent determination continued through a series of years, in spite of instruction, remonstrance and entreaty, of a part of the church, not the whole, not a majority, but only a part who ought to be pillars of the church and examples to the whole—a determination to live in the habitual violation of

some of the plainest commands of the word of God, without obedience to which, I am satisfied, religion can never prosper in this Community, nor flourish in this City—a disposition to cast aside; to disregard, to trample underfoot, all those mandates of the King Eternal, Immortal, and Invisible; which commands are, to mark, to avoid, to withdraw from, to have no fellowship with those who walk frowardly and cause divisions—a determination unlike that of the church of Ephesus, whom the Saviour commends.—“I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil.”—*Rev. 2 Chap. 2 Verse.* “And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church. And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by lying in wait of the Jews: And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house, Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our

Lord Jesus Christ. And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God."—*Acts, 20 Chap. 17 to 27 Verse, inclusive.*

This (continued the Reverend Gentleman) is the simple cause of my removal, and but for this cause, the time of my departure would not have been so soon. Is this a sufficient reason? I argue the affirmative: *first*, because it nullifies the engagement entered into when I settled here, and which was renewed at the period of my ordination.

I came here on the express condition (and there are certain documents to shew it), that the Members of the church should defend my character, should promote my comfort, and should co-operate with me at all times in upholding purity of doctrine, and discipline, and worship in this church. Now those who have neglected the commands I have stated, have exhibited a mischievous example, which cannot tend to the maintenance of pure discipline; they have violated their engagement; and the agreement into which we entered having been nullified, the obligation in me to remain ceases.

I argue that it is a sufficient reason, *secondly*, because it is almost, or quite impossible to conceive, that there can really be that attachment to the Minister, and that regard to the church, which Scripture clearly prescribes, when there is a constant disposition to countenance, to sanction, to encourage, and to associate with those whose darling employment every week and almost every day of their lives, is to injure the Minister and church in every possible way.

I consider it a sufficient reason in the *third* place, because however devoted, however solici-

tous, however indefatigable that Minister may be, it is almost in vain for him to expect to see prosperity in the church, when by the chief and influential Members of that church, some of the plainest mandates of the Almighty are trodden underfoot.

I consider it a sufficient reason in the *last* place, because piety cannot long be maintained in any church, whilst those means which God has expressly ordained with the view to keep the church pure in principle, are entirely disregarded ;—whilst there is no attention paid to those ordinances of Jesus Christ, which are ordained with the view of bringing offenders to repentance, and to lead others to stand in awe and sin not. Every instance of disregard to these commands, is a premium offered to faction, a bribe presented to corruption. I trust I ever shall esteem, not all, but nearly all of those who have neglected these commands, who have disregarded these important parts of the Gospel of Christ, though their conduct in those particulars I have adverted to I must truly reprobate, as displaying a want of regard to the Minister of the church, and as discreditable alike to their understandings and to their hearts.

The cause of my departure is one thing, and the time another: for settling the latter point, various considerations ensue. The first thing suggested to my mind, was, (and every opinion I have entertained, has been confirmed by that of experienced Ministers, whom I have been in the habit of consulting in every case of difficulty and delicacy), that I should by no means leave my post until my removal should be permanent; that I should continue here, and endeavour to enforce the maintenance of a more correct discipline in the church; or that I should continue here until I might have a pretty tolerable certainty, that I should be succeeded by an orthodox minister of God, one who would not be a pander to the vices of Antinomians, and a mere tool and victim of their caprice; and this was an object that lay near my heart;—I was also desirous whenever I relinquished the pastoral office, that I should have good reason to hope the church was sound in faith and practice, and that it would continue so; and had it not been for this object, there are things to which I have submitted, to which under other circumstances I never could have submitted.

Some will recollect what disgusting farces

were acting at our social meetings a few years ago, through Antinomian instigation; frail members were tampered with, more especially those who were poor and puerile, and weak and servile, to induce them, publicly and in an insulting manner, to pray *not* to God, but *at* their Minister; and thus make him the pander to Antinomian vices, and the mere tool of corruption and faction. I am happy to say that there were only two in the whole church, that could be persuaded to act a part in a farce so disgraceful; one of whom has been brought to infinite repentance by the things he has suffered. The consequence of this singular interposition, was, that the prayer meetings were for a time broken up altogether. Why! that was not what ought to have taken place! The church as the voice of one man ought to have arisen, and by an indignant expression of their unanimous sentiments, taught the fools a lesson they would never forget; and thus humble those, whose pleasure it was to attempt by unjustifiable means, to accomplish their own ends! This was not done, however; I was obliged to take matters into my own hands, and a few months put an end for ever to that impious and hypocritical work. A length of time passed on without

many additions to the church (a case of no uncommon occurrence, where Ministers have labored for a series of years), and our pecuniary resources were prevented from improving, and were rendered more deficient than by such as failures in business, and removals by death. These things (said the Reverend Gentleman), fix the time of my departure; and entertaining a hope that the church is in such a state, as that I shall be succeeded by an orthodox minister of God—one who will not suffer himself to be made the tool of any party—I have resigned my pastoral office, and this is the last service in which I am likely to be engaged. I have vindicated my character and conduct, a vindication which all of you who are accustomed to read your Bible with attention, will pronounce as a perfect justification of my conduct, though I am well aware it will be considered by some as extremely injudicious.

I shall now in a much more general way, proceed to review the past, and anticipate the future. “The time of my departure is at hand.” This leads me in the *next* place to review the past.

Every man who looks back on a course of years, whether he has been employed in business, or engaged in any other way; and every Minister when he looks back on ten years of pastoral labor, will be sure to find some things said and done, which would have been far better if they never had been said and done; and some things which should have been said and done which were never said or done. In taking a review of my case the principal alteration I should make (if my ministry were to begin over again), would be, to make a decided stand at the outset against those monstrous evils, which in course of time, partly through my youth and inexperience, were parleyed with for six years, every year increasing in their animosity, and becoming more difficult to eradicate. This is the principal alteration I should make; I lament it was not the course I then pursued. "The time of my departure is at hand," and this leads me, *first*, to look back on the ministry I have prosecuted.

Ah! my hearers, it would have been a melancholy task to have performed to-night, if I ever had entertained any doubt in my mind, of the truth of those doctrines I have preached; or if

I had reason to believe, that I ever have acted with partiality and hypocrisy, in directing the government and discipline of this church : and if my conscience told me that to please man, I have cried Peace! Peace! when there has been no peace. If that had been the case, the slave at the gallies chained to the oar, the malefactor in the dungeon, and the murderer at the gallows, would occupy enviable situations compared with mine : their crimes might be productive only of temporal evil, mine must be fraught with eternal evil ; their crimes might injure the property and destroy the body of man, mine would have injured everlasting interests, and destroyed immortal souls.

“ Tis not a cause of small import,
 “ The Pastor’s care demands ;
 “ But what might fill an Angel’s heart,
 “ And fill’d a Saviour’s hands.”

“ They watch for souls, for which the Lord
 “ Did heavenly bliss forego ;
 “ For souls, that must for ever live
 “ In raptures or in woe.”

My object in preaching has been to declare the whole counsel of God, without omitting any part of it ; to declare all that counsel, and that peace, harmony, union, and importance which distinguish its various branches, and which appear in the preaching of the Law of Christ,

and of the Writings of his Apostles. With this view I have ever dwelt much on the fact of man's ruin, depravity, helplessness, and guilt by nature and by practice : this has been the groundwork of the whole system of religion that I have preached ; this has pervaded every sermon, this has been strongly implied and asserted in every religious exercise in which I have been engaged. On the ground of that depravity into which man is plunged, I have ever set forth the atonement of Jesus Christ, as the common basis of a sinner's hope, as having power to cleanse from all sin. I have insisted on the absolute sovereignty of divine grace, in the bestowment of the blessings of salvation ; and have asserted in a like unequivocal manner, the frequency, and the universality of the invitations and offers of mercy addressed to every sinner, to induce him to repent, and to turn unto and believe in Christ, and anticipate the blessings of salvation. I have preached the necessity of the renewal of holiness, and have traced this renewal, to the regenerating and sanctifying influence of the holy spirit : and in obedience to Apostolic mandates, have, to the displeasure of some, taken care to affirm, that all those who believe in Christ must be careful to maintain good

works. I have asserted that it is the duty of every sinner to repent, to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and turn from the error of his ways. I have dwelt much on the blindness, the inexcusableness, and the impenitence of the unconverted ; at the same time I have ever urged Christians to bear in mind, that they are indebted to divine grace for every mercy that they experience, and that it becomes them to acknowledge that it is by the grace of God they are what they are ; and I have ever urged them to act upon the inquiry, “ What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits ? ”

With regard to pastoral duties, I have endeavoured to administer the ordinances of Jesus Christ in simplicity and purity, according to the gospel. With regard to the discipline of the church, and in carrying into effect the Laws of Christ, it has ever been my aim to act without partiality, without hypocrisy, and without respect to persons. There have been individuals in some periods of the history of the Church, who have wished, and have been so foolish as to express that wish, that there should be one mode of proceeding in cases of offence of the rich, and another mode of proceeding in cases of

offence of the poor ; to such desires I have never yielded one single moment, well knowing that with God as well as with the church, there is, and ought to be, no respect to persons. Whenever I had reason to believe that real piety has been possessed, however weak, I have always been willing to propose the individual to the church ; and have often found that those who have been thus proposed, have afterwards proved its most conscientious, its most intelligent, and its most consistent members.

In the early period of our history, many old professors of religion (I was then a stranger and knew not their previous history), who had been in every community in the town, were introduced into ours,—thrust in by persons of the same stamp as themselves. I was thought a young man by some of the would-be-wise ones, young in comparison with those who had been professors of religion of thirty years standing : some apostatized,—in course of time some have gone to an awful account ; others have gone to the world lying in wickedness ; others have been joined to other communities, who have been so unwise as to admit them when we contemplated their expulsion, or had finally expelled them.

I have never pretended to be a *parlour* preacher ; I do not understand the art of canting ; I could not commit to memory half-a-dozen or ten Theological phrases, and repeat them in a different or the same order every day, or many times a day, in every society, and on every occasion, from the beginning of the year to its close, and persuade myself that it was religious conversation : I should find it impossible ; it appears to be disgusting cant, and has no religion about it. I have heard it a thousand times, until I have been nauseated.

If any one of the members of the church, ever asked information on any point of doctrine, or of experimental, or practical religion, I have given them, in private intercourse, the best advice I was able to impart ; or I have taken the subject home to my study, and given them the best result I could communicate at some future period. Many scores of such inquiries have been made by young members of the church, and if ten-fold more had been made, I should have cheerfully given my attention to all. Such has been the ministry I have prosecuted.

2ndly, I shall notice the effect it has produced.

Whatever success attends the ministry, it is to be ascribed to the grace of God alone. When I compare the success that has attended my ministry, with the best information I can obtain respecting the success of other ministers, I don't know that I have any reason at all to be dissatisfied or discouraged. There are very many cases, in which ministers have steadily labored for twenty years, without having experienced so many visible instances of usefulness, as I have been blessed with in less than ten years; God (eternal glory to his name!) has not suffered me to labor in vain, nor spend my strength for naught. Since the organization of this church about nine years ago, ninety-nine members have been admitted; of these, some of whom I highly valued, have fallen asleep in Jesus, but the greater part continue until this day;—of these ninety-nine, full two-thirds were strangers to religion when I commenced my ministry amongst them, and of these two-thirds, a majority have traced their conversion to the blessing of God, and to that ministry; whilst others have had their supineness aroused, who had long remained dormant, or passive, or divided beneath the ministry of the Word. You would mistake, however, if you would judge of

success merely or chiefly by numbers of additions to the church : the church does not contain all the piety which results from the Minister's labors ; perhaps not a quarter, or a tenth part. Some who have been casual visitors here on a Sabbath-day, have received impressions which have led them to set out on the road to Heaven : others have become subjects of similar experience, but have been removed to adorn the doctrine of God the Saviour in a different and distant place : and how many more, the day of Judgment can alone disclose ! There have been cases, in which persons who have received everlasting benefit here, have been proposed for admission into the society, but the Lord has seen fit to take them to himself, before the period of their admission arrived. It has been my privilege to attend their dying bed, and to witness their sincerity of repentance, their elevation of hope, their vigour of faith, and to hear their dying blessing to God for their souls, derived through the medium of my ministry ;—nearly twenty have I committed to the grave, and have endeavoured to improve the mournful event ; and most of these have I consigned to the tomb, in sure and certain hope of their resurrection to eternal life. Sixty-one have I dedicated to God in Baptism,

many of whom are now growing up in youth, under a course of religious instruction by means of their Parents, or by means of the Sabbath School ; and whom I trust that God will never cease to bless and preserve. When I consider these things, so far from being dispirited, and discouraged, and dissatisfied, with the result of my ministry, I feel myself called upon thus publicly to thank God, and take courage.—But when I compare the success that has attended my ministry, with the success that I have desired and with the necessitous condition of the people among whom I have labored, then I feel that my success is indeed small, and I am ready to sink into dejection. About one thousand four hundred times have I preached the glorious gospel of the blessed God ; and taking into account the administration of the Lord's supper, and the prayer meetings, three thousand times have I presided in this assembly. And what has been the effect of all these religious services? How many of these sermons, how many scores of them, how many hundreds of them, have been attended with no visible proof of the glory of God, to your salvation, and encouragement to me your Minister? To what cause must we trace this? not surely to the

gospel that has been preached—it was the power of God unto salvation to every one that believed it—nor was it owing to the weakness or inability of the dispenser of the gospel, for it pleases God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. That there has been no more success, is through your depravity and guilt; you have been careless hearers of the word, and have gone away to forget it; you have not treasured up your salvation: you have not much faith, and if what you have heard of religion has not proved beneficial to you, you must take the shame and blame to yourselves, who heard so much and benefitted so little. Surely this would not have been the case, if you had heard with less levity and indifference, and worldly mindedness.

It is your own fault however, and not the fault of the gospel. The opportunity for improvement from these sermons hath passed away for ever, and can be reclaimed again no more: they have gone to give their final account, to bear awful testimony against you before the tribunal of Heaven. What an account will they have to give, and testimony to bear, in the case of those who heard the gospel almost as

often as I have preached it! and yet continue hardened sinners! or obstinate unbelievers! or bold transgressors! or immoral profligates! or halters between two opinions! Oh! for a sinner to have one thousand four hundred gospel sermons to bear witness against him at the day of judgment, is enough to make one shudder!—and what an awful account will they have to give in respect to those who, beneath my ministry, have been content to live in sin, and have declined from the good ways of God, and apostatized! Melancholy fact!—once alive apparently, and twice dead, and that whilst under the sound of the same gospel—beneath the same ministry, associating with the same congregation. O turn ye to the Lord, that your Minister may not separate from ye without the hope of meeting again.

It is a fact, that whilst the preaching of the gospel is arduous, and that no man can effectively preach it to the same people for a number of years without giving himself up to reading and meditation; yet after all, this is not the most difficult or trying part of the pastor's life. The experience of ten years has convinced me, that amongst the greatest of the Minister's trials, are

the fears a conscientious man entertains lest he should fail to acquit himself in the sight of God in such a manner as he would approve ; the distressing circumstance of having to appear in the pulpit at all times, in almost every state of mind : if my heart bleed I must come ; or if you have the head-ach you must not stay at home. Among these difficulties too, are the overcoming our own feelings, and in encountering the opposition and the errors of others. Nevertheless, the conduct of some of you has satisfied me, that there are other trials, greater than that of preaching the gospel : amongst such is to see sinners, and even professors of religion, and even members of the church, hearing listlessly and carelessly, even if they can be said to hear at all, those truths which Jesus taught, and which he died to ratify. Another trial is, to find those on whom a Minister has indulged the most pleasing hopes, go away, violate all their professions, crucify the Son of God afresh, and put him to open shame by a conformity to the errors of this sinful and idolatrous generation. And another trial is to look over the field he has labored in for years, and find that field which he has sown and watered with prayer, barren and unfruitful, and then to retire heart-broken to his

study. This is the experience which has satisfied me, that if a man has not disinterestedness enough to be careless of his own peace, and of the salvation of souls—if he has not courage to encounter calumny from those who ought to strengthen his heart, it is better not to enter the ministry at all. These difficulties must however be encountered. “The time of my departure is at hand :” this has led me to look back on the past ;—it also leads me, *secondly*, to anticipate the future.

Where my lot will be cast, or what my future circumstances will be, is at present uncertain. I bless God this gives me little anxiety : that kind Providence, which has hitherto guided and fed me, and has crowned me with loving kindness and tender mercy, will not fail to direct aright the steps of those who, by faith and prayer, commit their way to Heaven. I anticipate the future with regard to the interests of the church. I cannot fail to think of what may be the condition of this community after my departure ; nor can I fail to think how we shall be received at the judgment seat of Christ.

First, I cannot help reflecting on what may

be the state of this community after my departure. If after a year or two Providence should call me to visit this neighbourhood, to see my relations and friends, in what state shall I find this community? Will Zion mourn because none came to her solemn feasts, because her gates are desolate?—(*Lam. of Jeremiah, 1 Chap. 2 Verse.*) Shall I find you steadily maintaining truth and purity and peace? Or shall I find discord and confusion reigning? Shall I find you standing fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free; or shall I again find you entangled in a disgraceful bondage? In a word, if before I enter this town, I make an enquiry into the state of this church and congregation, and discover that truth and purity predominate, it would be a gratification and pleasure for me again to appear amongst you. Shall I learn, however, that such a change has taken place as would render it decidedly sinful for me to come unto or to bid you “God-speed?” Respecting these things my mind is oppressed, and at the same time elevated with hope: and may the hopes that are cherished be realized!

One of the most important duties incumbent upon you, is to supply the vacancy occasioned

by my departure. Make it your concern to have a Minister who will gratify the church: be concerned to obtain a Minister likely to excite attention, to convert the unconverted, to increase the congregation, and to keep it together when collected—a Minister whose character and abilities are such, as will tend to promote the extension and respectability of dissent, in independence in this town and in its immediate neighbourhood. To obtain such a Minister requires great discrimination; and having by means of prayer and discrimination, obtained a man after God's own heart, not after your heart, a man after God's own heart, is the minister you must seek; having obtained him, I charge you to esteem him very highly for his work; and let your attachment be not in word and in tongue, but in deed and in truth. Do not expect that he should preach to please you always, wish that he should preach to please God. It is possible that your taste respecting preaching may be fastidious, and vicious and corrupt; sure I am it is so, if you retain the influence some of you have imbibed from old professors of religion in this town, trained up as you have been among them,—professors who would think of trespassing upon and interfering

with a Minister's preaching on faith and practice, until he laid aside all regard to Scripture, as well as all regard to common sense. Ever desire that your Minister's preaching, may correspond with the preaching of Jesus Christ, and of his Apostles: whether it satisfies you or not, be assured, that in proportion as it corresponds therewith, will that Minister be useful and bold, and that in proportion as it varies therefrom, will it be useless or perhaps pernicious. Ever desire that your Minister may be a man of God; never suppose it right for him to be the servant of man, or the tool of any ignorant blockhead! Never ally him with the dregs of stupidity! Entrap him not into the mouth of the lion! Betray him not into the claws of the bear! If he be a young and inexperienced man, and knows nothing of the character of religious society, and shall himself be in danger of falling into disastrous consequences, it would be barbarous in any member of this church, not to rush forward and snatch his youth and inexperience from the impending evil, as pernicious to the cause, and as distressing to himself. And if there should happen to arise among you, any of those who would on any account introduce Antinomianism into the church,

whether the individual be an officer or officiating member, or whatever he may be called,—let the voice of the church expel the traitor, and put a stop to his machinations.

I am led to reflect, *secondly*, on what sort of meeting together shall we experience in another world : How many shall I see on the left hand whom I expected to see on the right ! And how many shall I see on the right hand whom I expected to see on the left ! How many of these who have been regarded as my joy here will be the crown of my rejoicing on that day ? How many of my converts will be proved to be converts of Christ ? How many of this church will have a place in the Church Triumphant ? These, my hearers, are considerations that oppress with great weight, the mind of your Minister, now that “the time of his departure is at hand.” I pray that God may give you grace to repent—I rejoice to acknowledge that many of you have been no cause of trouble to your Minister, but have been comforts and blessings to him. I have received from you expressions of kind attachment which, I trust, I never shall forget. May God reward you a thousand fold in your own consciences ; and may your reward

be great in heaven ! And if you would continue to be the friend of your Minister; when his face is no more seen amongst you—if you who have been no cause of grief to him when here, would be a comfort to him when gone, there is one way in which you may still be kind—*pray* for him in your secret devotions; forget him at all other times but faithfully remember him in your solemn scenes of prayer. Never more is it likely that I shall preach to you the unsearchable riches of Christ; in all probability never more for ever will the voice of him who has testified the Gospel of the grace of God, be heard again within these walls. All these circumstances I cannot help adverting to ; it is to be hoped that you will hear the same truths from the lips of your future pastor, that you have already heard from mine. Do not, I beseech you, put off the time of repentance until “to-morrow,” lest you should be numbered with the dead to-day: be assured that you will have to give a solemn account of the means of grace you have enjoyed whilst I have been with you, whatever your expectations may be, and however realized.

And now my friends, and brethren, and sisters, I recommit you to God, and to the word

of his grace, which is able to uphold you ; let your conversation be as becomes the gospel of Christ ; and whether I come to see you, or whether I do not, I shall be eager to hear that you stand fast in one spirit, in one mind, striving together—not separating,—striving together in the faith of the gospel, influenced by a public spirit to maintain the rights of the church. And now may that great Shepherd of the sheep, who brought from the dead, our Lord Jesus Christ, through the blood of the everlasting covenant ; perfect you in every good work, and working in you that which is acceptable and well-pleasing in his sight, bring you to Jesus Christ our Lord, in whom be glory for ever and ever. *Amen*

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**SPIRITUAL STATE OF ENGLAND AND IRELAND
CONTRASTED.**

A

S E R M O N,

PREACHED

AT DONCASTER, IN THE COUNTY OF YORK,

JULY THE 19TH, 1829,

FOR THE BENEFIT

OF

THE IRISH SOCIETY.

BY THE REV. CHARLES CATOR, A.M.

OF BRASENORSE COLLEGE, AND RECTOR OF BECKENHAM, IN THE COUNTY OF KENT.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR BALDWIN AND CRADOCK.

1829.



TO
THE INHABITANTS
OF
DONCASTER.

DEAR FRIENDS,

IN complying with the many wishes expressed for the publication of the Sermon preached at Doncaster, in behalf of "The Irish Society for Promoting the Education of the Native Irish through the medium of their own Language," I cannot but regret the utmost benefit to be hoped for from it will be to draw your attention to the subject. If, however, this outline of the different circumstances under which the spiritual condition of the People of England and the People of Ireland have been curiously placed, lead to further inquiry, and so induce you to support and to promote the interest of this useful Institution, the very simplicity of whose object is its highest recommendation,—besides that it aims at no more than is attempted for every other country by the

charitable and humane,—I shall truly rejoice in the opportunity thus afforded to me of consigning it to your care.—That this work may prosper, and that every blessing may attend you, is the sincere prayer of

Your faithful and obedient servant,

CHARLES CATOR.

SKELBROOK PARK.

N.B.—Whatever may be raised by the sale of this Sermon, beyond the cost of printing, will be applied to the benefit of the IRISH SOCIETY.

. A

S E R M O N,

E T C.

Acts XXII, v. 2.

**“AND WHEN THEY HEARD THAT HE SPAKE IN THE HEBREW
TONGUE, THEY KEPT THE MORE SILENCE.”**

In the great work of spreading the Gospel throughout the world, if there be one thing more necessary than another to be observed, it is a care to conciliate the people to whom we proclaim the glad tidings of salvation, by condescending, as well to their capacities, as to their prejudices and their customs. These last may be founded in error—they may be vain—they may be pitiable in the sight of one who walks by the light of the Truth: yet let it be remembered, that as “the candle of the Lord” is the only source of light by which the errors of darkness and superstition may be discerned, so is the total absence, or the partial privation of it, the prevailing cause of their existence in the human mind. Thus, in

whatever measure darkness and superstition shall have assumed the place of reason and religion, the effects produced by them, degrading as they are to mankind, when sanctioned by time and long usage, acquire a proportionate degree of veneration. These effects are to be removed only by the influence of truth: and whoever, animated by the pure principle of love to God and man, engages in the work of diffusing it, knowing his own liability to be betrayed, by blindness, by impatience, and by various passions, will patiently bear with the infirmities, the mistakes, and the delusions of those who, unacquainted with that vital principle of holiness, transgress the limits of duty enjoined by it. St. Paul declares that, “unto the Jews he became as a Jew, that he might gain the Jews”; and that “he was made all things unto all men, that he might by all means save some.”^a We are not, however, from this condescension to the weakness or prejudices of others, to imagine it is implied that he ever compromised one tittle of the truth; but only that he accommodated himself to the customs of the Jews, in order that he, being a Jew^b, might not offend a weak brother, and that he used the gifts^c bestowed upon him in conciliating the people, in order the more effectually to obtain a hearing for

^a 1 Cor. ix. 20. 22.

^b Acts, xxi. 26.

^c Acts, xxi. 40.

the Gospel's sake. "Yea, woe is me," saith he, "if I preach not the Gospel!"^a And truly did he, by patience and forbearance, by defending the doctrine and by preaching the Gospel, do every thing in his power to promote and to "contend for the faith once delivered to the saints."^b Thus it is the duty of Christian ministers to follow the example of the great apostle, to spread the Gospel as it is in Christ Jesus, in its pure simplicity, divested of every thing that can clog the understanding or abridge "the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free"^c—to uphold "Christ to be the power of God"^d, the only power by which the salvation of the soul is wrought, and "Christ the wisdom of God"^e, the only means of escape from the wrath to come, contrived by the unerring wisdom of the all-wise Creator of the world.—Still, when contending for this faith, as we cannot but acknowledge it an instance of God's favour, manifested towards us, in giving to us the knowledge of His Word, so must we remember that being entirely beholden to Him for it, we are bound to have respect to the less favoured condition of our fellow-creatures, from whom, in the inscrutable ways of Providence, the same privilege hath been withheld. We may lament the evils that arise out of false principles—we may en-

^a 1 Cor. ix. 16.

^b Jude, ver. 3.

^c Gal. v. 1.

^d 1 Cor. i. 24.

^e Ibid.

deavour to counteract them ; but if erroneous opinions or prejudices be to be subdued, they must be overcome by charitable forbearance,—by instruction in a better way,—by convincing the reasonable souls of men,—and by bringing the understandings of the people to a surer test than man's opinion ; for the contest will ever be found to lie between that which *is*, and that which is *erroneously esteemed to be*, the truth.

With the Bible open to us, and the grace of God to enable us spiritually to discern its doctrine, I am persuaded the congregation here assembled will not hesitate in consenting to the duty of extending the blessing to be derived from the possession of the holy book to all our fellow-creatures. Nor, when you look with compassion upon their prejudices, or their unholy customs, will you think it less needful to regard their capacities. Thus, while the duty is manifest to every true believer, that the Gospel should be preached to all, the necessity will be admitted of speaking to the people in a language that they understand, and of distributing the Word to them for their instruction, in their own tongue, provided any hope be entertained of substituting *light* and *truth* for *error* and *superstition*.

The words selected for the text, wholly uncon-

connected with the defence of St. Paul, in the midst of which they are introduced by the inspired historian, shew both the value of the gift of tongues with which the first Apostles were endued, and the effect of the judicious application of it, upon a clamorous multitude overwhelmed with prejudice and superstition. I have chosen them, because there is no point of doctrine involved in them : and thus we shall be left free,

First, to take a general view of mankind as they were affected by the *confusion* of tongues, and by the *gift* of tongues ;

Next, a more particular view of our own condition, compared with the causes which have made it to differ from that of our fellow subjects in Ireland ;

And, lastly, apply the inferences to be drawn from what shall have been said, to the especial purpose of my address to you this day.—May it please God to give me his grace to do it effectually, and according to his Holy Word.

To make one observation only, by the way, upon the passage from whence the text is taken : —St. Paul, being arrived at Jerusalem, at the suggestion of the Apostles, because of some that

were “zealous of the law,” had just only complied with the custom of “purifying himself after the manner of the law,” when certain Jews, who were of Asia, raised an outcry, and used great violence against him, to the peril of his life: he is, however, rescued from the fury of the people by the soldiers, who, nevertheless, mistaking him for a disturber of the peace, treat him with great severity. Upon this he addresses himself to the chief captain, who is surprised to hear him speak *Greek*. Explaining to him who he was, he begs to have a hearing; which being granted,—desirous to gain the attention of the Jews, he speaks to them in the *Hebrew* tongue. This was the language to which they were attached, and it had the instantaneous effect of reducing the riotous assemblage to a dead silence. But these circumstances, although only incidentally related, support, with the highest authority, the policy which I have declared to be necessary, in the work of disseminating the Truth.

Let me first, then, direct your attention to a general view of mankind as they were affected by the confusion of tongues and by the gift of tongues.

I need not dwell upon the subject of man’s complete dependence upon his Maker for the sus-

tenance both of his natural and spiritual life.—The scriptures declare,—that “if God hide his face from him, he is troubled :—if He take away his breath, he dies, and is turned again to his dust”^a :—again, if “because he likes not to retain God in his knowledge, He giveth him up to a reprobate mind,”^b then he is “filled with all wickedness,” and in the commission of every sin he is “worthy of eternal death;”—and if, in a land wherein “the sheep of God’s pasture” have received nourishment at His hand, there should be, as the Prophet saith, “a famine, but not a famine of bread, nor a thirst of water, but of hearing the words of the Lord,”^c and men “run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord and find it not;” we, blessed as we are with the revelation of the Holy Scriptures, may conceive the miserable condition, as well of those from whom God’s holy Word is withdrawn, as of those who “live without God in the world,”—or “fall down before the work of their own hands.” Of these last the case is pitiable,—but what words can describe the deplorable condition of the former ?

If there be one feeling of misery in the world greater than another, it is, that of a man looking up to a well known benefactor for help, and

^a Psalm civ. 29.

^b Rom. i. 28.

^c Amos, viii. 11.

finding not only his favour withdrawn, but also his hand actually lifted up in anger against him. — Whither, or to whom can he then fly for refuge? Who can give him consolation? Where find rest? Which way pursue?—Let him admit that he deserved his fate; still must his condition be deplorable. Yet in an immeasurably greater degree of misery than this was man, when the Almighty God, provoked to anger with the people for their sins, “confounded their language, so that they understood not one another’s speech,”^a and were, “scattered abroad upon the face of all the earth.”^b Granted it was for their presumptuous sins: yet, who can duly estimate the extent of evil thus entailed upon themselves and their posterity! If they had corrupted the Truth as they had received it from their fathers—if they had entertained false notions of the one true God—if they had forsaken his holy worship,—thus cut off from all communication with the faithful few—without a revelation of the Will of God to refer to—without the means of instructing their children in any other than their own *vain imaginations*: we need not be surprised at the dreadful enormities of their posterity, as we read of them of old, and as they are known still to prevail in heathen nations—that is, in the countries

^a Genesis, xi. 7.

^b Genesis, ib. v. 9.

which have not the knowledge of the “one true God and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent,”^a as it is revealed in his Holy Word. Neither need we be surprised at “their gods many and their lords many,”^b whose forefathers “changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like unto corruptible man—changed the Truth of God into a lie—and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever.”^c—Without any thing but tradition to depend upon, they could do no otherwise than “put darkness for light, and light for darkness.”^d

In the family of Abraham, the knowledge of God had been preserved by the revelation of His Word, till the coming of “the seed of the woman, to bruise the serpent’s head,”^e and to overrule the power of the prince of darkness. But when Jesus “came unto his own, they received Him not.”^f They rejected his doctrine; they put Him to an open shame and an ignominious death: and thus they brought down upon their sinful nation the heavy woes denounced against them. Their “house is truly left unto them desolate”^g; inso-much that, although they were “as the stars of

^a John, xvii. 3.

^b 1 Cor. viii. 5.

^c Acts, i. 23, and v. 25.

^d Isaiah, v. 20.

^e Genesis, iii. 10.

^f John, i. 11.

^g Mat. xxiii. 38.

heaven in multitude, they are now left few in number,"^a and these "a by-word in the midst of the nations amongst whom they are scattered."^b

But after that our Lord had completed the work of man's redemption, and, in proof of His victory over "him that had the power of death,"^c had risen from the grave, He "brake down the wall of separation between Jew and Gentile,"^d and with the first effusion of the Holy Ghost, He opened the understandings of His Apostles, and loosed their tongues to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation to all "men of every nation under heaven," in their own language. By the abounding of sin, the door of heaven had thus been closed against the children of men, who sought to reach it by "a building made with hands," and in their attempt were scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth, without a name wherein they had a common bond of union. But when "grace did much more abound,"^e the door of life eternal was opened to the scattered tribes of the whole earth; and the Apostles used their gifts of inspiration, by calling upon all men of all nations to be united in one body by faith in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, as the only "name under heaven given

^a Deut. i. 10. iv. 7.

^b Deut. xxviii. 37.

^c Heb. ii. 14.

^d Eph. ii. 14.

^e Rom. v. 20.

among men whereby they could be saved,"^a—whereby they could be restored to God's favour. By this door they were enabled to enter, "by a new and living way into the kingdom of God,—the building not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."^b And herein was an efficient remedy, provided by the grace of God, for the restoration of the Gentiles to the house and family of God.

The Apostles being now, by the power of the Holy Ghost, enabled to preach the Gospel in the language of every country into which they went,—to the Jews they explained the prophecies, and applied them directly to the things which they both saw and heard. In the name of Jesus they wrought miracles—in His name they called upon all men to repent:—to the Gentiles they explained the first principles of religion, and required that they should "turn away from idols to serve the living God,"—shewing to all men, that as in *Adam* all men were liable to *death*, so in *Christ* alone could all be made *alive*; thus teaching both to Jews and Gentiles the common interest and fellowship they had in salvation by Christ Jesus.

But how vain had been their undertaking to propagate the Truth, which alone was able to con-

^a Acts, iv. 12.

^b Heb. x. 20. and 2 Cor. v. 1.

vert the world, had they possessed no miraculous power of uttering words easy to be understood by the people to whom they were sent! Yet, with these advantages, “some believed and some believed not.”^a But this proves only the remanent power of sin, and the necessity of God’s Holy Spirit to enable men to discern and to receive the Truth, even though the letter be so plain, that “he that runs may read it.”

In the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, the opposition they encountered and the persecutions they suffered, are recorded. The patience with which they endured all things,—the constancy and power with which they maintained the Truth, by arguments and proofs from the sacred text of Scripture,—refuting the false reasoning of their adversaries, and their forbearance, severally afford us a lesson which we shall do well to put in practice. And this brings me shortly to take a more particular view of our own condition (I speak of it nationally) as compared with the causes which have made it to differ from that of our fellow subjects in Ireland, which I proposed as the second head of my discourse.

Now that the gift of inspiration has ceased, the

^a Acts, xxviii. 24.

“hearing.” of the Gospel in our own tongue is to be esteemed almost our highest national privilege. It is second only to the possession of the Bible itself; for “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”^a. The possession of the Bible puts men in the condition of the Samaritans, who, having heard our Saviour, believe, not because of the sayings of the preacher only; but by reading for themselves, they have, as it were, heard Him themselves, and know that “He is indeed the Christ the Saviour of the world.”² --And what but *this* possession of the Word of God in our own tongue hath so highly exalted our nation? If we look into the page of history, we shall find that not three hundred years are passed since our forefathers were delivered from the corruptions and idolatrous practices of the Church of Rome. These prevailed only while the Book of God was shut. When this was opened, it was discovered and declared, that “the Holy Scriptures contained all things necessary to salvation”^b; and that the Bible was of greater authority than tradition. This discovered, it was also avowed, that it was “a thing plainly repugnant to the Word of God, to have public prayer in the Church, or to minister the sacrament, in a tongue not understood of the people”^c. And hence have the

^a Rom. x. 17.^b Art. VI.^c Art. XXIV.

people of this land become “a wise and understanding people: And what nation is there so great, that hath ”^a for a long period “had God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God hath been in all that we have called upon Him for?”—But let me not, in the words of Moses, remind you of the blessings we have received, without the caution of the same faithful minister of God: “Only take heed to ~~thyselves~~,” O people of England, “and keep your souls diligently, lest you forget the things that the Lord hath done for you, lest He forsake you, and you utterly perish from amidst the nations of the earth.”^b

Next, from our own, let us turn to the condition of Ireland, which still remains, to too great an extent, in a state of almost heathen darkness—the result of the mistaken and inconsistent policy of those who laid the foundation of our own happiness.

It is our habit to speak of the barbarity of the native Irish: instances of cruelty the most appalling have stained the pages of our annals—yet, ere we venture to reproach them, let it be but known that “instruction” in their religious duty, through “the medium of their own tongue”, hath

^a Deut. iv. 6, 7.

^b Deut. iv. 9.

been forbidden them by the powers that were over them, and heart and hand will be persuaded to join in alleviating their misery and their misfortune. It might have been difficult to believe the fact, if it had not been recorded on the statutes, that the same authorities^a who wisely ordained that the Scriptures should, in the *English churches*, be read in the *English tongue*, because it was “understood of the people”, unhappily passed a law, that in *Ireland* also, the Scriptures should “be read in the English tongue”, which the people did not understand—and, that, “where English readers could not be found, they should be read in Latin.” This seems to have arisen out of a prejudice against the language of the Irish people: but this baneful practice, in defiance of many attempts, has operated to prevent the circulation of the Irish Scriptures, in the Irish character, till the latter end of the year 1827, not quite two years ago, and with the circulation of the Scriptures in the Irish character, the reading of the Scriptures amongst the Irish people altogether. For even the Bible Society, which at first was instituted for the purpose of supplying the Welsh people with the Scriptures, in their own tongue, doubting the propriety of dispensing the same blessing to the native Irish, did not until

^a 28 Eliz. cap. 2. 5. 15.

the subject had been frequently discussed, resolve to publish the Bible in the Irish language at all, and then unhappily they adopted the Roman character, publishing 5000 copies of the Irish Bible in it, which were rejected through the suspicious prejudices of the Irish people, the character of the Irish language resembling rather the *Hebrew* than the *Roman* letter.—That Society has to its credit since published a good edition of the Bible in the *Irish tongue and character*, which has been received with gratitude, as the greatest boon ever conferred on Ireland. It is remarkable, however, that, ever since the year 1690, not one edition of the Scriptures in the Irish character had been printed, till that in 1827: and that of 1690^a, although published in the Irish character, was chiefly for the use of the Highlanders in Scotland. “I have sought for one”, said one who was grieved for the darkness of his native land, in 1823, “ever since I valued a book: I have looked into booksellers’ shops and stalls; and I never saw but one, which I bought for *two pounds*: and this is the state in which my unhappy country has been left.”^b

It never was, we may be assured, the desire of our forefathers to deprive the people of Ireland of

^a Brief Sketch, p. 28.

^b Reports, 1823, p. 28.

the use of the Scriptures; but imagining, that the perpetuation of the Irish language would prevent the closer connexion of the Irish people with the English, they vainly endeavoured to substitute the *English* for the *Irish tongue*, and so to compel the people to become “of one language.”

In contrasting the different effects of the two systems of human policy, or the different methods of administering to the spiritual necessities of the people of *England* and of *Ireland*; when we see a ministry, provided for the spiritual necessities of the *one* people, unable, nay, almost by law forbidden, to minister in the churches in a tongue “understanded of the people”, and the poor, in a more degraded condition than almost any other poor,—and for *the other*, ministers provided and prohibited from ministering to the people in any other *but* their *own* tongue, besides a provision made by law for the infirm, the aged, and the sick; amongst *these* order and contentment prevailing, and amongst the *other*, disorder and distress: we cannot but infer, that the policy observed by the inspired historian would have been a better policy for Christian England to have pursued; and that, had the people of Ireland been addressed in their *Irish tongue*, and provided for with the same measure of charity*, there would have been

* Why should not a law be passed to require the services of public worship to be performed in the Irish churches by the

an attentive silence, and an equally happy people. —But this brings me to the application of the inference to the especial purpose of my address to you this day, which is the last thing to which I proposed to draw your attention.

It has fallen to my lot to be the sole advocate, in this part of the county, of “The Irish Society for promoting the Education of the Native Irish through the medium of their own Language.” To other, and I trust more efficient hands, its interests must henceforth be consigned, in this district: and allow me to express a hope, that it may ever find a place in your memory. To its aid you have before most charitably contributed; nor have I reason to think less favourably of it than I have heretofore done, or that it is less deserving of your regard. Next to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, which has for its especial object the instruction of the people of our own land in the knowledge of the Gospel, there is none that

Protestant Irish clergy in the vernacular language of Ireland, in those parts of the Island wherein the Irish language prevails, as it is required of the English clergy in English churches to minister in the “vulgar” (English) “tongue”;—or as it is required of the clergy of the Principality of Wales in the Welsh language;—or as it is practised in the Highlands of Scotland in the Gaelic language by the Scottish clergy? I believe, upon inquiry, it would be found that, in no one solitary instance the religious ordinances or services are performed in an Irish Protestant church in the vernacular tongue!

seems to me so deserving of support. Its object is to do for Ireland only what is attempted for almost every nation under heaven. It is simple in its operation. Irish teachers, of whom many are Roman Catholics, are employed to instruct the people (children and adults) to read the Scriptures in their own tongue. Of these, there are from THIRTY TO FORTY THOUSAND persons receiving instruction; and a very large proportion of them are adults. There have been distributed *eight hundred and forty-seven bibles, two thousand and forty new testaments, two hundred and twenty-three portions of the Old, and six thousand, seven hundred, and seventy-seven, of the New Testament, forty-eight prayer books, and many thousands of primers, &c.* The bible has been received with gratitude by all, except the Roman priests, who have opposed the progress of the labours of this Society, with as much violence as the Jews of Asia did St. Paul. Questions of policy may arise; but there can be no question about uttering words in a language which the people understand, if we expect a hearing. Complaints may be made of the barbarity of the Irish people; but of what avail will it be to tell them, that “without holiness no man shall see the Lord,”^a if they understand not the tongue in which they are to be addressed by the minister of the Gospel?

^a Heb. xii. 14.

Under the circumstances in which the people of that distracted country have been placed, they deserve the pity and the help of their fellow Christians here. But how shall I prevail with you most effectually in favour of this Society? Behold the state of Ireland, and judge whether the policy pursued towards that distracted people can have been prudent. Under the control of those who, "by their traditions, have rendered the word of God of none effect," they are filled with superstition and unrighteousness. It is not the object of this Society to make proselytes,—it is to instruct the people in the Truth. But here, alas! amid the jarring and discordant opinions of mankind, as ably supported by arguments on either side, as opposed to peace and charity, some one, confounded with all that is before him, may, with Pilate, put the question,—“What is Truth?”^a A question this, indeed, of great concern; but one from which we need not turn, as Pilate did, without an answer. For, “Truth is the Word of God, revealed to mankind for their sanctification.”^b To the end that he might bear witness to it, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world, was born, and for the same cause came into the world. By His Holy Spirit, he still bears witness to this holy Word, that it is true. Truth is stamped with the undeviating character of peace

^a John, xiii. 38.

^b John, xvii. 17.

and holiness. Like its Divine Author, it is "without variableness or shadow of turning."^a It ever points to the way of godliness, and hath in it no error, and no doubtfulness: whereas the image and superscription of its counterfeit is graven only on the short-lived opinions of those who maintain its value by arguments, of which there is no end, and in them very little advantage. Is there any thing prevailing contrary to peace and holiness in Ireland? (I speak nationally.) Then does the Truth not prevail. Is there any thing that admits of doubtful disputation? Then, be assured, Truth prevails not there. Through the door to the darkest places in Ireland, (the strongest holds of Satan,) opened by this Society, I beseech you join hands in administering the light of Truth. Our sole object is, to teach "Truth" as it is written in the Bible, in the language of the Irish people. And, although it be not the object to make proselytes to party, yet if, in spreading the knowledge of God's Word, the superstitions of the people should yield to the Scripture which declares, "there is but one mediator between God and man"^b; need we shrink from the charge of making proselytes, because the Virgin Mary may lose a votary? Or if, instead of trusting to *extreme unction*, or *masses for the dead*, the Irish people should rather *repent*

^a James, i. 17.

^b 1 Tim. ii. 5.

them of their sins, and afterwards live so as that, when they die, they may *commend their spirits into the hands of the Lord Jesus*, in firm reliance for their salvation upon His all-sufficient sacrifice for sin. Or if the priests themselves should, by searching, find out Him, “whom they have ignorantly worshipped”, to be a jealous God, who will not divide His honour with another; and henceforth, instead of invocations to saints that have been long since dead, they should make their prayers *in spirit and in truth to God, who requires such to worship Him*^a, in the Name of Jesus, (the only Name whereby they can be saved,) we need not regret the assistance given to this charity. Neither need we be surprised that the Romish Church, preferring traditions, should thus lose some of her members. Nor yet, need we be surprised if, as of old, when “the Word of God increased”, so now, when it again prevails, a great company of the priests should leave their errors and their superstitions for the light of the Truth. And if they find no bond of union in the “voluntary humility of worshipping angels”, wherewith they have been beguiled, and fly for refuge to the Church of England, whose communion is held firm only by faith in the Chief Corner-Stone, which is Christ the Lord, we need not fear to receive them with open arms.

^a John, iv. 23.

It were easy to enlarge upon the corrupt practices of the Romish Church ; but I state this much only, to shew that the operations of the Society are such as may be joined in by all, as it is content to teach the Word, and leave the issue to the providence of God. And since the promise of the Word of God is that, if it go forth, it shall not return unto him void, but it shall prosper in the thing whereunto it is sent, there is great encouragement to support a work of charity, which has entered upon an arduous task with so much success, as to promise, in due time, the gathering of an abundant harvest. Here then I leave the matter. If you have reason to rejoice in the power of appealing to the Bible, for instruction in a case of doubt; if you know the Holy Volume can “give understanding to the simple”^a; I beseech you, extend to your fellow-subjects the same fruitful source of wisdom in their own tongue. You will thus cheer some of the dark recesses of vice and immorality with the rays of light which never yet have shone within the cabins of the poor of Ireland. To places unknown, except to the inhabitants, and to the most miserable objects of this charity, the lower orders of the Irish poor, this Society extends its care. And what chance can there be of success, except we approach them

^a Ps. cxix. 130.

friendly, and address them in their own tongue? The ~~most~~ ignorant, and the most destitute, are sought after and instructed in their cabins. But I leave the reports to detail the particulars, of which many have been distributed. I make no strong appeal to your *feelings*; for I had rather engage your *understandings*: well knowing, by *often experience*, your cheerful and ready aid in this and every other labour of Christian love. Let me, therefore, here commend this sacred cause of God and our fellow-creatures to your protection. And I commend you, my brethren and fellow Christians, to God and to the word of His grace. May He grant unto you every blessing, both temporal and spiritual here, and so build you up in His holy Church, that hereafter you may have your “inheritance among them that are sanctified”^a in those mansions wherein our Lord Jesus Christ Himself is gone to prepare a place for them that love Him, and keep His commandments.

^a Acts, xxvi. 18.

THE END.

SIX SERMONS,

SA. 1824

PREACHED IN THE

PARISH CHURCH OF PATCHAM,

NEAR BRIGHTON,

IN THE SPRING OF THE YEAR 1828.

By W. K. CLEMENTSON, CLERK, M.A.

They that forsake the law praise the wicked: but such as keep the law contend with them.—Prov. xxviii. 4.

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.—1 Cor. xv. 22.

Thou in thy gifts art manifold,
By them Christ's Church doth stand:
In faithful hearts thou writ'st thy law,
The finger of God's hand.

THE ORDERING OF PRIESTS.

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TO THE PARISHIONERS OF PATCHAM.

SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF ADAM,

As these Sermons were written expressly to be preached in your Church; and were actually preached there, with your patient permission, to inscribe them to you is nothing more than a debt of gratitude fairly due. My sincerity you will be less inclined to doubt perhaps, if I tell you, that few, very few indeed, are the places of worship, in which they would have been listened to with the like equanimity: so lost is this present generation to all sense of divine TRUTH.

'Tis true that some of you left the Church; some of the very lightest of the chaff, the breeze carried off; but the greater part of you remained through the whole with enduring firmness.

Until we be again confronted, farewell.

I have the honour to remain,
In the cause of truth,

Your obliged and zealous servant,

W. K. CLEMENTSON.

PREFACE.

For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding.—1 Chron. xxix. 15.

To the parishioners scattered throughout various districts of this kingdom.

On the preceding page I have addressed the *parishioners* of a very confined district, using the term there in its modern acceptance. But here I shall take the liberty of using the same term in its original; though now entirely obsolete signification. (See Sermon iv. p. 65.) The word *parishioner*, on its introduction into this language, was perfectly synonymous with the word *stranger*, as used by the sacred writers. King David's confession in the motto has ever been the language of the people of JEHOVAH; as well of the Christians under the new, as of the descendants of Abraham under the old dispensation.

The *Jews* however in the Redeemer's day were no longer *Jews* : (John viii. 39. & Rom. ii. 28.) and with equal truth we may now say that our modern parishioners are no longer *parishioners* ; no longer '*strangers and pilgrims* on earth,' in search of a country ; it being most clear, that they have found one, with which they are perfectly well satisfied : and that their rest is fixed and established on a temporary earth, in contrariety to the divine will, which must quickly slip from beneath them, and leave them, entirely stripped of all rest ; in other words, leave them—in the *bottomless* pit. Clear again certainly it is, that in the awfully severe, though strictly just language of Abraham in the parable, '*they do receive their good things in this life.*' (Luke xvi. 25.) Alas ! poor Dives ! how much better it would have been for you to have remained silent, than to have heard from *Father Abraham*, such a terrible satire upon your extreme folly : *Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things.* '*Having already received your good things, how unreasonable, son Dives, it is in you, to ask for a repetition of them in your eternal abode ; to ask even for the slightest cessation from being tormented in that flame !*'

This is one of the many vivid pictures

drawn by the REDEEMER. Well indeed might he say;—*Woe unto you, that laugh now!* (Luke vi. 25.) Abraham in this parable disowns his son, and proves the Lord's words true;—*if ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.* (John viii. 39 & 44.) So again with regard to parishioners outwardly or nominally, it is recorded, that they shall say unto the Lord;—*we have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.* (Luke xiii. 26, 27.) An answer by no means less severe than that of Abraham to Dives.

The parishioners of the preceding address would have no more of such teaching as the reader will find in the following pages: however there are to be found some, who understand me, when I address them, as 'strangers and pilgrims on the earth, who have here no continuing city; but seek one to come, which God hath prepared for them.' (Heb. xi. 13, 14, 15, 16, & xiii. 14.) For you it is, that the following Sermons are published, from a firm persuasion, that they will be most thankfully received by you, as the genuine 'milk and honey,' the rich produce of the Holy Land. Their publication was indeed within

my view, as part of my motive, on first sitting down to write them; arising from the consideration, that many of you, the Lord's strangers upon earth, who dwell scattered up and down in remote parts, have had but little opportunity of hearing the word of TRUTH preached, since the death of our late excellent Shepherd and Bishop V. M'Culla: for saith the Scripture;—*how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent; (Rom. x. 14, 15.)* that is, sent in the power of the Spirit of Truth?

But even if such had not been my original intention; the circumstance of their rejection at Patcham, together with other circumstances that occurred after the delivery of them from the pulpit would have been sufficient to have induced me to send them to the press. When I first accepted Mr. Clark's invitation to preach for him at Patcham, it never for a moment struck my mind, that my preaching there would come to the knowledge of the Bishop of the Diocese; or that the esteemed Prelate would be led to take the matter at all into his consideration. However far from feeling regret on that account, I desire to be very thankful: for nothing can be more gratifying to me, than to have it in my power, 'before many witnesses,' to bear

testimony to the truth of our most blessed Redeemer; and to know that some attention, at least, is attracted to it, from fallen man.

Those who were present at Patcham Church, will on perusal find the third and fifth Sermons in some points materially altered, and improved: for this reason; that a much clearer insight into the meaning of those texts has been given me, than I had, when the Sermons were composed last spring. The other four have undergone revision of course; but no very material alteration. In the third will be found some allusion to and condemnation of the idolatry of the Church of Rome. In the 122nd page of my edition of 'the epistles of Ignatius,' &c.—I observed that 'a more suitable opportunity will, it is likely, occur for me to declare my mind on that subject.' After subjoining here a few additional observations, I shall consider that pledge to be redeemed; though, *if spared*, I may still have occasion to return to the subject in future publications; especially as the floodgates of error, delusion, and idolatry are continually opening wider; and according to present appearances, their cursed idols may ere long be exhibited in every corner of the land.

I remember, that superstitious Catholic

writer, Butler, in 'his book of the Roman Catholic Church,' brings forward a quotation from the celebrated Dr. Johnson, to justify their most damnable idolatry. The doctor says, 'that there is no idolatry in their falling down and worshipping the host.' Now observe his ground of denial: 'because they believe God to be therein, and they worship God.' A most excellent reason indeed! Upon the same ground then, I affirm, that there never was such a thing as idolatry, nor an idolater in the whole world: for the most ignorant of them can bring forth as good a reason for his abominable wickedness, as the weak and foolish Dr. Johnson does for the Roman Catholics. I am here reminded of a passage in Prideaux of precisely the same character as follows: (he is speaking of the Persian Magi. v. i. p. 267.)—'For all the parts of their public worship were performed before these public sacred fires, as all their private devotions were before private fires in their own houses; *not that they worshipped the fire*, (FOR THIS THEY ALWAYS DISOWNED) *'but God in the fire.'* The learned Dean by his concluding observation does indeed appear to acquit these blind heathens of the charge of idolatry: however he is not quite so great a blockhead as the foremen-

tioned doctor. Hear him again for a few moments:—‘In the interim it may be proper to acquaint the reader, that at this time all THE IDOLATRY, of the world was divided between two sects, that is, the worshippers of *images*, who were called the Sabians, and the worshippers of *fire*, who were called the *Magians*.’ (p. 222.) Here he plainly calls their awful worship—*idolatry*.

But allowing for a moment, for argument’s sake, Dr. Johnson’s ground of justification to be solid, as it regards the *bread*, ridiculously called the *Host*; let me ask, not the Doctor who is dead; but Butler, who I believe is still living, if they actually believe God to be also in that ugly little image on the crucifix. This question must absolutely puzzle him and his fellows in iniquity, as much as Christ’s question, respecting ‘John’s baptism,’ puzzled the Jews: for if he answers me in the affirmative, he must acknowledge himself by many degrees more stupid, brutal, and ignorant, than the Ox or the Ass. And if he answers me in the negative, he establishes the idolatry from his own lips. The apology for the image, by a Roman Catholic, who calls himself the Bishop of Siga, in his sermon circulated gratis among the inhabitants of this town, is too contemptible to require exposure from me at present, further than

what is already done. In answer however to his impious question—‘*could a more appropriate object stand upon a christian altar, or be placed before the eyes of a christian assembly?*’ I shall set before his eyes the reason why Jēhovah removed Israel out of his sight:—**FOR THEY SERVED IDOLS, *whereof the LORD had said unto them, ye shall not do this thing.*** (2 Kings, xvii. 12.) The true manner of setting before the eyes Jesus Christ crucified (Gal. iii. 1.) is shewn in the following sermons, more especially in the second. Protestants in general may not be aware, that the Catholics have an image stuck up on a cross in their chapels, before which I have myself seen them bow many times during their morning service. Guilty indeed must that government be, which allows such practices in the land at all, even in places howsoever secret: more guilty still are those, who vindicate such an awfully idolatrous people. The undoubted consequence of which will be, that we shall shortly have these images stuck up more publicly, and this idolatry committed before the Sun.

What has excited me to speak my mind on this subject, is the practice of the present day, by public writers, and public speakers, of laughing to scorn the belief, that ‘the Church of Rome is idolatrous and damnable.’ The

denial of this proposition proves indeed the state of extreme darkness, which men's minds have lapsed into in one short century : and proves forcibly also, that the pursuit of the arts and sciences has no enlightening effect upon the understanding in a spiritual sense. For in what age were these pursued with more eagerness, or more success? That she is 'idolatrous and damnable,' I shall most strenuously maintain, though there should not be an individual in the world to believe me. Were the latter offensive word to be suppressed, it would still be fully implied in the former ; for all the world knows, and even the Catholics themselves are constrained to acknowledge, that what is *idolatrous*, must be *damnable* : therefore it is right that they should accompany each other, the point being fully established.

I did not, my fellow-parishioners, think of addressing you in so many words : now at length I close with this exhortation : continue to baptize yourselves in the streams of Israel ; and you will continue to be true sojourners : settle not : *let your loins be girded about and your lights burning ; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding ; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him imme-*

diately. Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. (Luke xii. 35, &c.)

Believe me,
Your most affectionate Friend,
W. K. CLEMENTSON.

P.S.—As the congregation at Patcham positively demanded of their Curate to close the door of their pulpit against me, for no other reason, as I verily believe, than that my Sermons were ‘according to the rule of the Holy Scriptures,’ I feel induced upon after-consideration to add a few extracts from ‘the form of consecrating Bishops, Priests, and Deacons according to the order of the Church of England.’

‘*The Bishop.*

‘Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon you this office and ministration, to serve God for the promoting of his glory, and the edifying of his people?

‘*Answer.* I trust so.’

‘*The Bishop.*

‘You have heard, brethren, as well in your private examination, as in the exhortation which was now made to you, and in the holy lessons taken out of the Gospel, and the writings of the Apostles, of what dignity, and of how great importance this office is, whereunto ye are called. And now again we exhort you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you have in remembrance, into how high a dignity, and to how weighty an office and charge ye are called: that is to say, to be Messengers, Watchmen, and Stewards of the Lord;

*to teach, and to premonish, to feed and provide for the Lord's family; to seek for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for his children who are in the midst of this naughty world, that they may be saved through Christ for ever. * * * **

** * * 'And seeing that you cannot by any other means compass the doing of so weighty a work, pertaining to the salvation of man, but with doctrine and exhortation taken out of the Holy Scriptures, and with a life agreeable to the same: consider how studious ye ought to be in reading and learning the Scriptures, and in framing the manners both of yourselves, and of them that specially pertain unto you, according to the rule of the same Scriptures: and for this self-same cause, how ye ought to forsake and set aside (as much as you may) all worldly cares and studies.'*

'Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands. Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained. And be thou a faithful dispenser of the word of God, and of his holy sacraments; in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.'

More of the same import might still be quoted from that book; but I forbear. 'You have now given us sufficient'—will be the opinion of my readers. However, as 'the Catholic Relief Bill,' (which is in truth 'the Church of England oppression bill,') has passed into a law, since the former part of this preface was composed, I cannot refrain from declaring it to be my firm belief, that had the Clergy generally performed in any tolerable measure, what they solemnly bind themselves to perform, neither the people, nor the government could have fallen into their present alarming apathy. A very few steps more, and their places are gone for ever. And really, to confess the truth plainly, it is nothing more than they deserve: for they have afforded clear manifestation, that either they do not consider their Church worth defend-

ing ; or that they are destitute of the weapons necessary for its defence. Which has led me to call to mind an observation written a considerable time back, on perusing the second volume of 'Lingard's England,' p. 43, 'Gildas says, the clergy of this island *slumbered* before the Saxon invasion : Lingard says, they had long *slumbered* at the Norman invasion : Wickliff says, they *slumbered* before the reformation : their present dreadful *slumbering* may then be reckoned the fourth *slumber*.'

Nor can I lay down my pen without further declaring that one cause at least of these divine judgments, is undoubtedly the support, which they have invariably given to that most oppressive and grinding scourge, that complex system of compound usury, denominated the funding system, joined with a terribly destructive fluctuating currency : a scourge so contrary to the scriptures, as well as to sound policy, that it ought to excite the abhorrence of all men ; much more that of the 'Stewards of the Divine Mysteries ;'—the guardians of the rights, comforts, and happiness of the people, both temporal and spiritual. *Mischief shall come upon mischief, and rumour shall be upon rumour ; then shall they seek a vision of the prophet ; BUT THE LAW SHALL PERISH FROM THE PRIEST, and counsel from the ancients.* (Ezek. vii. 26.) The truth of the following passage from Mr. M'Culla's valuable sermon on Zeph. i. 12, is becoming daily more manifest :—'God in his goodness brought his gospel into this land, and by the light thereof brought the nation from under the tyrannical power and darkness of popery. How have they requited him ? why, they have in all distinctions of profession returned in heart, mind, ways and manners, to the flesh-pots of popery.'

W. K. C.

Brighton, May 25th, 1829.

SERMON I.

And who is sufficient for these things?—2 Cor. ii. 16.

April 20, 1828.—Morning.

Upon the subject of sufficiency in general, we shall find the children of this world not lacking in wisdom. For instance, no one is so foolish, when about to travel a dangerous and unknown road, as to take a guide with him, who is no better acquainted than himself with the difficulties of the path. Every one is careful to select that conductor which can lead him through with the greatest dispatch and the greatest security. So when a person wishes to learn any difficult art or science, he inquires where the best master of that science is to be found.

But in that which is the most important matter of all,—the eternal state of the soul,—man is far from being so wise : he is indeed, beyond question, the very reverse ; I must be allowed to say altogether destitute of true wisdom. In total contempt of the Saviour's words, he sets but small value

upon his soul ; and is very well contented to follow a blind guide. But at this we need not be surprised ; for the Saviour has told us the reason why it is so : the people themselves are blind (*if the blind lead the BLIND* : Matt. xv. 14.), and being blind, they do not know but that they may be going in the right path : they are very ready to believe such as profess that they see, and therefore take no further thought about the matter. Where however, through divine mercy, eyes have been given, those that lead astray are assuredly rejected, and a true teacher is earnestly sought out.

This great point will be further developed, when we come to the words of the text ; to a clear understanding of which a cursory view of the context will be found helpful. The Apostle, filled with a deep sense of gratitude at the general success of his ministry, breaks out into a hearty thanksgiving : *Now thanks be to God which always causeth us to triumph in Christ* ; (14 v.) mark : ‘always causeth us to triumph :’ the Apostle was a soldier in the army of Martyrs : and it appears that there is no such thing as being beaten in this warfare ; no defeat can be suffered. And the reason of the victory’s being sure is told by John : *because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world* : (1 John iv. 4.) and more fully in the Revelation (xix. c.), where the great leader of this army is described as going forth on a white horse, the emblem of purity : *and in RIGHTEOUSNESS he doth judge and make war. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.* Every thing here, we see, was pure : nothing of corruption : but purity and sincerity. *And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations : and he shall rule them with a rod of iron : and he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.* This is indeed a most terrific description ; and as this smiting and ruling of the nations is done in RIGHTEOUSNESS, how bad must the nations be !!! However, such is the gospel of

Christ : it is nothing more than the preaching of the pure Truth, that is thus set forth in a figure. And does not this agree with the prophet of old, who said : *there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.* (Isa. xlviii. 22. and lvii. 21.) Let us now return to Paul, who thus continues : *and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.* The Apostle's words here have great sweetness in them ; the knowledge of Christ carries a savour with it, he says : that is, a heavenly fragrance. And why ? Because to know him, is *eternal life* : (John xvii. 3.) to have the knowledge of him, is to be redeemed from death, and from all evil : it is, to experience boundless mercy : and to that soul which has truly and spiritually been made acquainted with *the terror of the Lord*, (2 Cor. v. 11.) mercy is sweeter than honey. The knowledge of Christ is then a savour indeed. *For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish : to the one we are the savour of death unto death ; and to the other, the savour of life unto life.*

From these last words it is very evident, that one part of mankind is saved, and the other part destroyed ; and that the sure and certain knowledge of man's everlasting state, whether in glory or misery, is communicated unto him by the very same outward means ; by the preaching of the gospel. A most solemn consideration this,—for ANY human creature ; and certainly much more so for the individual himself, who is made the instrument of delivering the divine word, which, as we have just read out of the Revelation, is a sharp sword. A solemn reflection it is for a preacher of the gospel to make with himself ; that while he may be the means of saving some, he assuredly is instrumental also in redoubling woe to others : and for this cause the office of preacher never was, nor ever can be an agreeable work to mere flesh and blood. Where it is made agreeable, it is to that new man of grace, which is born of the Spirit, and which delights to do the will of his Redeemer.

It was the view of the greatness and of the solemnity of this work, to which no other work on earth can be compared, together with the corrupt manner in which he saw it performed by numbers, that made the Apostle break out into an exclamation: *And who is sufficient for these things? For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.*

Let me now beg your earnest and serious attention while, through the Spirit's teaching, I point out—

I. What these things are, and

II. Those persons who are sufficient for them.

I. Then, what are these things? A further view of the context will help me to elucidate this head. It is evident that by the words 'these things,' Paul alludes to the things of which he was the preacher; and he tells us in the iv. chapter, and 5th verse, precisely what he did preach, saying: *for we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord.* These things then are those which relate to Christ Jesus the Lord. Now in speaking of this great person, I shall 1. tell you why He, the eternal Word, was made flesh. (John i. 14.) 2. take a concise view of his work while he dwelt on earth; 3. of his work since his resurrection; and 4. of the manner in which he is made known to his people.

1. In clearing the first head—why he was made flesh—it will be necessary to refer you to the Old Testament; or first covenant between God and Man. Christ, be it remembered, is the new testament or second covenant. So says Paul: *who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; that is, ministers of the Spirit: (2 Cor. iii. 6.)* and then he still further explains his meaning by saying, *the Lord is that Spirit. (v. 17.)* The first covenant was made with Man, at his creation in Adam. God made him very good: (Gen. i. 31.) and he was rich in the enjoyment of the fellowship of his gracious Maker. And he was certainly bound for such transcendent benefits, to love his Maker with

an undivided heart, and to render the most perfect obedience. Man, however, through the subtilty of the serpent who beguiled Eve, broke this righteous law; and instead of being any longer rich he was sunk in poverty: *for your sakes*, says the Apostle, *the Lord became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich*: (2 Cor. viii. 9.) *that ye might be rich*: which words plainly imply that man is sunk in poverty. For on his unhappy rebellion against his most blessed Maker, he was driven from the garden of Eden, which means that he was stript of every blessing which God had heaped upon him, when he made him *very good*: *therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden to till the ground from whence he was taken*. So he drove out the Man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubims, and a flaming sword, which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life. (Gen. iii. 23, 24.)

Behold now the sad condition of fallen man! poor and helpless, a covenant-breaker, and cut off from communion with his own Maker; with the spirit of sin and death already in the possession of his soul and body; and eternal death impending over him, and waiting to seize him as soon as his body shall return to the dust. Here is poverty; here is misery, passing description! 'But we do not feel so,' you may say unto me; 'we feel comfortable and happy:' so much the worse: this ignorance appears to me none of the least, perhaps it is the very worst, of all the dismal consequences of the fall. Fallen man is in the situation of a person bleeding to death during a sound sleep: who, when he awakes, will find himself in the bottomless pit of everlasting torment. Many imagine that they are now in the same state in which God made them. An awful mistake! Man acknowledges himself to be imperfect; to be subject to passions, pains, and infirmities: he acknowledges this; and supposes that God made him in this state. Blindness and ignorance beyond measure great! What! can the All-

sufficient Almighty make any thing imperfect ? The very thought of such a thing is most dishonourable to the Creator : it is impious : it is nothing less than for a man to charge his Maker with evil. No, no ; God made man upright ; (Eccl. vii. 29.) but he is no longer so : he is now the very reverse of that upright state. There is one verse in the bible, which sets forth man's unhappy change in the strongest possible light, when the eyes are opened to see it : *and they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.* (Gen. ii. 25.) This was the primitive state : none of you could have the assurance to tell me that such is our state at present. Man had no sooner fallen than he found that clothing was absolutely necessary : and too many of us do not hide our shame even then.

Well, having now clearly from scripture proved the fall, have I not at the same time demonstrated the cause, why the Eternal Word was made flesh ; or in other words, why God, our Creator, *took upon him the form of a servant ?* (Phil. ii. 7.) Surely I have, as will still further appear in the sequel. He is the remedy, and the only remedy for so severe a loss : a loss which the most sensible of us can only feel in part. God, who in infinite justice could not but inflict death, the penalty of the broken law, yet in his love and mercy to his lost creature had a remedy at hand, which he promised to send, when he cursed the crooked serpent, the Devil. And as Satan had wrought man's ruin by means of the woman ; so God was pleased to revenge his wickedness, and bruise his head by means of the woman's seed. (Gen. iii. 15.) The promise of this Redeemer was repeated at Mount Sinai, when the law was applied to the Children of Israel ; and was prefigured in the daily sacrifice of the Lamb, morning and evening ; as well as other burnt offerings ; and more particularly by the annual passover-lamb. And at the appointed time he was brought forth, *MADE OF A WOMAN, made under the law, to redeem them, that were under the law.* (Gal.

iv. 5.) Observe, *made of a woman*, in agreement with the promise in Eden: *it, the woman's seed, shall bruise thy head.*

2. We shall now take a concise view of the Redeemer's work, while he dwelt on earth. This work Paul has expressed in the passage just cited; *to redeem them that were under the law*; that is, to pay to God a sufficient price for those who were liable to be punished with eternal death for the transgression of the law in Adam in the garden of Eden; or in other words, as Paul expresses himself to the Corinthians, also before quoted; *that ye through his poverty MIGHT BE RICH.* Let us see then how this great work was effected. It is evident that the divine justice could not possibly be satisfied without a full infliction of the penalty somewhere: it is also further evident, that no mere finite creature could ever atone for an infinite offence, such as ours. Had our sin been only against a creature, it would have been finite; but being committed against the Law of the Creator, it was infinite. None therefore, but one who is infinite; that is, none but one who is God the Creator, could ever pay the redemption price. This miraculous man then, who was made of a woman, and who knew no sin, (2 Cor. v. 21.) is also one of the persons of the Triune Godhead; one of the Almighty persons of the three-one Jehovah: this is clear from Paul's words,—viz., *WHO WAS RICH, yet for your sakes he became poor: who was rich*, that is, rich in eternal glory and blessedness with his Father, (John xvii. 5) before he was born of Mary, and took upon him the form of a servant. Paul indeed is quite amazed at his goodness and condescension in so parting with his riches, and becoming poor for a sinful creature's sake: and when any soul is blessed with a true and feeling sight and sense of this, it is then that he sucks honey out of the rock: (Deut. xxxii. 13.); out of the everlasting Godhead of Christ: it is then that he drinks in mercy freely, like a thirsty soul, with

a hearty draught; and feels that he is really in a land flowing with milk and honey: with milk, that is, the pure word of truth; and with honey, that is, the mercy and sweetness that flow with it. We, who believe, have no doubt whatever of Paul's meaning in these words: *who was rich*: but in this same epistle, which is indeed a rich epistle, a large body of Divinity, he is still more express with regard to the person of the Redeemer, telling us, *that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them*: (v. 19.) This is very plain, *God was in Christ*: then most true it is, that help was laid upon one that is mighty. (Ps. lxxxix. 19.) The truth was, he had a heavy load to bear, and had need of infinite strength. Being made under the law, the law had power to lay hold of him: so he took the trespasses of his brethren upon his own Mighty shoulders, and as Peter says, *bare our sins in his own body on the tree*: (i. ii. 24.), which weight in the end took away all his human strength, and completely pressed his innocent soul and body to death. Innocent certainly, for there was no sin in him; only our sins were charged upon him; consequently they are not imputed unto us: and this great goodness and grace, being engraven upon our souls, reconcile us unto him; bring us back from following Satan, to follow himself. This great goodness and grace, when written in our hearts, make it impossible for us not to love him; impossible not to obey him, and despise every thing else in comparison of him, notwithstanding the inveterate opposition of our natural inclinations.

3. Having given you this brief description of the Lord's work on earth, I come to the third point: viz. to speak of his present work. No sooner was his sacred body raised from the grave, than he received the reward of his severe labour. *All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth*. (Matt. xxviii. 18.) *Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name, which is above every name, that at the name of*

Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth ; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Phil. ii. 9, 10, 11.) There are very many other passages throughout the scriptures, descriptive of the exaltation of our Lord : but these are quite sufficient for the present to shew that he is now, as the Prophets foretold, an unlimited and Almighty Sovereign, whose throne is for ever and ever. (Heb. i. 8.) And on this throne his first care certainly ever has been, and now is, to send forth the word of his powerful gospel, which is as a fan upon the earth, separating the chaff from the wheat. (Matt. iii. 12.) The preaching of the gospel has ever proved that mankind is composed of two sorts ; those who receive the word, as something sweet and nourishing to their souls ; and those who reject it. And though the Lord does not, appear to our outward view ; yet his Omnipresent eye is ever most closely watching both these classes of mankind. And he holds the reins of government in such infinite perfection, as to cause every event to work for the eternal welfare of those, who are enabled to receive his truth : and, on the other hand, so as to cause every event to effect the downfall of all them that hate him : *he taketh the wise in their own craftiness.* (1 Cor. iii. 19.) But that part of his work, which is the most perceptible to our senses, and which more immediately concerns every one of his redeemed people, is the hearing of their petitions, the redressing of their grievances, and the clearing of their path, when they happen to be brought to a 'stand still.' The people of the Lord are often hard pressed by the enemy of their souls, who lays many alluring baits to draw them from their allegiance : and this causes them to look upwards unto their strength : (2 Chron. xx. 12.) this causes them to understand, and to give obedience to Paul's exhortation : *pray without ceasing* : (1 Thess. v. 17.) and then to bear witness to the fulfilling of that scripture, *God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.* (Ps. xli. 1.) So

tenderly doth the Lord regard his own people, that when their enemies grieve them he taketh particular notice of it, and frequently signalizes them by some extraordinary mark of justice, which cannot escape the observation even of the wicked. (2 Kings ii. 24. Acts xii. 23. and passim.) and proves the truth of his word; *in all their affliction, he was afflicted.* (Isa. lxiii. 9.) When the strait by which they are distressed appears to all human conception utterly insuperable, after the prayer of faith they find that their Sovereign's hand is not shortened; that there is no strait so pressing, no difficulty so great out of which he is not able to deliver. (2 Kings vii. Numb. xi. 22, 23, and passim.)

4. Let me now, in the fourth place, shew you a little of the manner in which God makes himself known to his people. It cannot be too zealously impressed on the mind, that the people of the Lord are a very peculiar people, (Tit. ii. 14, 1 Peter ii. 9.) totally different in their views, tastes, and feelings, from the rest of mankind. But this is not the case with them originally; for we all spring from the same corrupt source; we all are by nature sons of Adam, and the children of wrath. (Eph. ii. 3.) How then are we separated? God in mercy writeth with his sword the spirit, the New Covenant of grace in our hearts. And this divine work he beginneth by making us sensible of the truth of the first covenant, which we have broken. Under this feeling we are greatly cast down: our pride is severely wounded, when we learn that we never can, by any power of our own, repair the broken Law, and regain the favour of our Maker. Arminianism, that is, corrupt nature's strength has now received a deep wound in the root, from which it never afterwards recovers; whereas in those convictions or warnings of conscience, which are not from above, that is, not caused by the Spirit of Truth, however severe they may be, the root of pride and self-righteousness, instead of being wounded, is greatly strengthened; for the law-principle inherited by our fallen nature is set hard at

work by them ; and pride is consequently nourished and increased. In fact, in these legal, or still more correctly named—*earthly*, convictions of a guilty conscience, no ray of the Divine Majesty is ever seen : though people may be, and often have been, even driven out of their minds in this way ; yet this scripture is still true with regard to them : *thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself.* (Ps. l. 21.) Their understandings rise no higher : they have a very unsound mind. But however, where the glory of the law really shines into a sinner's soul, the eyes of proud nature are put out, and that sinner is caused in sincerity to lament his blindness : he knows now for the first time what unbelief is : although it reigned in his heart from his birth, yet he never knew it before : he would now willingly give all he has in the world for faith ; but he cannot purchase it. The spirit of faith is the creation and work of God ; and no soul can believe until that work is completed within him : he feels justice, and he cries for mercy : he feels death, and he cries for life : his cries are not now dead and formal ones, as formerly they were : they are piercing, coming from a soul that fears day and night, and has none assurance of his life : (Deut. xxviii. 66.) they are not such as can give him any pleasure, like the Pharisees' and hypocrites' cries : they are not such as nurse the pride of nature : they are the cries of one in distress ; of one that says in the morning, *Would God it were even !* and who says in the evening, *Would God it were morning !* (Deut. xxviii. 67.) This is something of the Spirit's teaching under the application of the holy and spiritual law. This is the way in which I have been taught myself. But as the Lord, the Spirit continues this teaching, he gradually cuts away unbelief, and works faith—in mercy. No man ever had any real living faith in divine mercy, till after he had first a strong and clear faith in the pure, self-existent, and inflexible justice of his Holy Maker. Such a thing is impossible : it is absurd even to suppose it. Mercy, before a due sense of justice, is a mere

idle term without meaning; the airy whim of a deluded brain. The goodness of God in sending his Son from his bosom into the world, begins now to make some impression on the soul: (John i. 18. & iii. 16.) that Son's agonies under the weight of our sins begin to draw forth a sympathetic feeling from within. The pride of nature, originally derived from the Devil, is further cut down, till at length it actually gives up the ghost, and the soul feels itself to be a passive creature, and *believes in mercy*. After this manner the Spirit of Faith is brought forth; the transgressing Son of Adam is now translated completely and eternally from under the Law, the first covenant, and has entered into the new covenant, which it is impossible for him ever to break; for it is written in his heart. (Jer. xxxi. 31, 32, 33, 34, & Heb. x. 14. & following verses.) Let not any one imagine himself to be a true disciple of Christ, or a child of God, till this new law has been thus written within him: such an imagination will be found but a woeful deception in the end. Those souls in which the Holy Ghost is working this saving knowledge of Christ, never can be persuaded that they are 'vessels of Mercy' till Faith is completed; they fear to the very last, that they never shall obtain Mercy; they become more and more sick unto death, by reason of their hope's being deferred. (Prov. xiii. 12.) Their false foundation has been withdrawn from underneath, and they can never rest on any man's word; they can never rest until they find the only true resting place, which is *God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them*. There are abundance of teachers certainly, who will speak of rest, before this faith; and abundance of deluded people to follow them: these are they whom Paul speaks of in the words, which immediately follow the text, *For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God*. Having now shewn you in part what *these things* are, which Paul here speaks of, the second head of the text remains to be cleared; viz.—

II. The *persons* that are *sufficient*, or duly qualified, for the

great work of making these things known. And for the better illustration of this subject it appears to me to be needful to show you who is *insufficient*.

1. *There are some that make themselves preachers, finding that they can procure a comfortable living in that way of life, and not being aware that they are doing any thing seriously wrong. These are evidently insufficient, as they can produce neither divine nor human authority: and in such characters the scripture is fulfilled: I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the Lord: (Jer. xxiii. 32.)* Even should they be possessed of great learning, and great powers of speech, that would not mend the matter in the least. At the best they could but speak what they had learnt by their own studies, their human wisdom, which is, in direct opposition to the gospel, a work of the law. Paul says Christ sent me,—*to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. (1 Cor. i. 17.)* Now this *wisdom of words* is—*human acquirements*, with which the gospel has nothing whatever to do: the cross of Christ is made of *none effect* by such acquirements; that is, it becomes no cross at all; for *wisdom of words* is exactly what is palatable to the corrupt taste of fallen man: he receives it with gladness. Whereas by calling the gospel a cross, Paul clearly shews that it is most bitter to man's taste, most contrary to his feelings and wishes.

2. *There are other preachers, who are made so by human ordinances and ceremonies: equally against these also does the scripture stand: I sent them not—saith the Lord. Because the sending of the Lord is by an internal voice, over which man has no control, and which sets aside every thing of human appointment, that stands IN OPPOSITION TO IT.* The rulers of the Jews strove greatly to silence the Apostles; but their efforts were in vain: close prisons were repeatedly found to have no effect in binding the word of the Lord; and

Peter's words are still upon record,—*we ought to obey God rather than men.* (Acts v. 29.) Nor was there any thing of human appointment even in the Jewish or typical Church: the Priests and every thing else were ordained of God; and the true prophets were all immediately sent by the same Almighty power. And if this was so under the Law, how much more must it be so under the gospel, the glory of which so far outshineth, nay hath completely obscured, the glory of the former: *For even that, which was made glorious, had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth.* (2 Cor. iii. 10.) *That which was made glorious, viz. all the typical institutions and ceremonies of the Mosaic economy; the glory of all this vanished away, when the Almighty bowed the heavens and came down to tabernacle with men; (2 Sam. xxii. 10, and Rev. xxi. 3.) and introduced the gospel dispensation, which is indeed the glory that excelleth, 'the tabernacle that shall not be taken down; where the glorious Lord is unto us a place of broad rivers and streams.'* (Isa. xxxiii. 20, 21.) Well then, all these preachers against whom that scripture stands—*I sent them not*; all these, of whatever denomination they may be, to whatever sect they may belong, are **THE MANY** which corrupt the word of God. 'They cannot possibly preach it *truly*; nor to the profit of any one soul in divine wisdom; though they may greatly exert themselves, and take a world of pains about it. The reason of this is, that the name of the Lord is **SACRED**; (Judg. xiii. 18, and Rev. ii. 17) *and kept close from the fowls of the air,* (Job xxviii. 21.) by which fowls are signified the false preachers, that feed upon the flesh (the fleshly feelings and delusions) of all them that perish. (Rev. xix. 21.)

3. I shall now, in the last place, in a very few words be enabled to shew you, **WHO IS SUFFICIENT**—*for these things*—these most weighty things. And to do this, I need not go further than this very second epistle to the Corinthians. Paul is pretty clear and full upon the subject in the following

chapter III. He there tells us that the work of the ministry is to *write*; observe well, to write,—*not with ink, but with the Spirit of the Living God*: (v.3.) How then can this mode of writing be performed by any wisdom, or power of man? *Not with ink, but with the Spirit of the Living God*: and not in any outward substance, *but in fleshy tables of the heart*; that is, in the human soul, whose habitation is a body of flesh. And this accords with what we read in Jeremiah: *I will write my new covenant in their hearts.* (xxxi.) So that when it is thus written in the human soul, it becomes a part of the man; from which he can never be parted again, any more than he can be parted from himself. Paul might well add in the fifth verse,—*our sufficiency is of God*; for it must be evident to every one, that it is not within the reach of human power to write in this truly miraculous manner. Observe well again; that to learn any thing, to acquire knowledge of any kind by the faculties of the soul, and to have it well treasured up in the memory, is not to have it written in the heart. That is only to have it in the head, which in the course of time may be all entirely lost again; but when any thing is once written in the heart, that can never be lost. *Our sufficiency is of God, who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the Spirit.* (2 Cor. iii. 5, 6.) And if God made Paul an able minister of the Spirit, he was certainly a sufficient one; for there is no imperfection with God. And the manner in which he so qualified him, was by first bringing him into the new covenant, and then making his soul fat with the sacrifice of Christ; and then laying the necessity upon him to preach in his name, for the feeding of his sheep. (1 Cor. ix. 16.) The way of the Lord is to break the bread to those whom he himself hath chosen; which being done, he commands them to set that bread before the people. (Mark viii. 6, 7.) He does not send them empty handed to feed his people; he gives them the bread of life out of his own hands first; they are

not suffered to go and buy it ; that is, gather it up from books, or other human methods. Their supply must be immediately from himself, or else it will never nourish his ransomed flock ; which soon grows lean and sickly upon adulterated bread ; and the Lord is the only giver of that which is pure ; for which reason he calls it *the hidden manna*. (Rev. ii. 17.) Many will perhaps be ready to say unto me ; but how are we to know when a minister is thus made sufficient ? There is no way of knowing but by having ears that can hear. (Matt. xiii. and Rev. ii. 7, &c.) The rulers of the Jews often expressed great anxiety to know whether our blessed Saviour was the Christ or not, *and said unto him, how long dost thou make us to doubt ? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.* (John x. 24.) To whom he answered, *I told you, and ye believed not.* Now Peter and the other disciples never asked him such a question ; they found out by their circumcised ears, that he had *the words of eternal life* : so cleave unto him they must. (John vi. 68) These same words of eternal life are the treasure, which all the able ministers of the new testament have in their earthen vessels ; (2 Cor. iv. 7) for by no other words can that GREAT WORK OF WRITING IN MEN'S HEARTS EVER BE ACCOMPLISHED. Amen.

SERMON II.

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have eternal life.

JOHN iii. 14, 15.

WHAT is more gratifying to a person in *danger* than to be helped into a place of *safety*? The many millions of people, that were on the earth in the days of Noah, when they saw the waters actually rising upon them, would have been right glad, could they have then procured admission into the Ark: for they could not but believe the words of the LORD, when they saw the fulfilment of them take place: however their belief came too late: *the LORD had shut Noah in; and no MAN could open.* (Gen. vii. 16. and Rev. iii. 7.) The words of Christ to Thomas must here forcibly strike the mind: *because thou hast SEEN me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.* (John xx. 29.) Noah was certainly one of these blessed ones; for he believed and

enable me, handle this passage of holy writ. I. These words,—*that whosoever believeth in him should not perish*, clearly and forcibly imply, that Mankind is in an extremely dangerous, in a perishing condition. And this is no new state, into which man has recently fallen; it is the state in which he has ever been born. In the concluding verse of this chapter we have John the Baptist speaking as follows: *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; BUT THE WRATH OF GOD ABIDETH ON HIM.* Take particular notice of the last words; *but the wrath of God abideth on him.* The wrath of God was on him before ever he heard Christ spoken of; and if, when he does hear, he believes not, why then that wrath abideth on him: it is not removed: he still continues under the curse of the law; where he was before: even before ever he sprang from the loins of Adam; being nothing but a branch from that injured root. Why should Paul say to the Ephesians,—*we all were by nature the children of wrath: (ii. 3.) by nature; that is, by birth; from the very beginning of our sensible existence; or as it is written in the Psalms; from our very conception in the womb? (li. 5.)* Why should Paul thus write? We will allow the Apostle to answer for himself from Rom. v. 12. *by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.* Now it is clear that death could not have passed upon all men, had they not all been of one essence or substance; and all actually existed in that one root Adam, when the curse and sentence of death were passed upon him. This knowledge of the subject being ingrafted in the heart of Paul by the powerful pen of the eternal Spirit, he testified to the Ephesians, as Jesus did to Nicodemus: *we speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen: (v. 11.) viz., that we are all by nature the children of wrath, with the sentence of eternal death impending over us; and therefore certainly in a perishing condition.*

Having proved to you the fall of man, last Sunday morn-

ing, it is not my intention to dwell longer on the same subject again to-day ; but before I pass on to the second head of my text, I shall observe, that no mere human reasoning whatever, will enable any man to really feel his danger. There must be in the heart of the Preacher, the Spirit of Christ, giving him a true feeling of what he is preaching to the people, in order that the same spirit may go forth with his words, and engrave them in the heart of the hearer. The stream of the words spoken and the spirit of life, that they are charged with, are the water and the spirit of which a man must be born, in order to enter into the kingdom of God. (John iii. 5.) Therefore unless the Preacher be possessed of divine life, the work would be cold and dead altogether. It is only by the power of the eternal spirit of truth, that the ground of the heart can be made good, and prepared to receive the seed of the divine word. (Matt. xiii. 23.) A heart thus prepared can embrace the word, and hold it fast. And when any one is made sensible of his danger in this way, he will never rest again until he finds *safety*. But though I have observed that no mere human reasoning will make a man sensible of his danger ; yet the preaching of the gospel does all consist of reasoning ; but reasoning taught from above, mind : the true preacher never appeals to the passions ; he appeals solely to the understandings of his hearers. It is said of Paul, that when he arrived at Thessalonica, where was a Synagogue of the Jews, that as his manner was, he *went in unto them, and three Sabbath days REASONED with them out of the Scriptures* : (Acts xvii. 2.) and again when he came to Corinth, we are told, that he *REASONED in the Synagogue every Sabbath and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.* (xviii. 4.) And in like manner when he came to Ephesus, he *entered into the Synagogue and REASONED with the Jews* ; as we read in the nineteenth verse of the same chapter. Thus you see a little of what was Paul's method of preaching the Redeemer. And if I should hear a preacher appeal-

ing to the passions and working on them, I should require no other proof of whose agent he was: I should know immediately that he was not one of the preachers of the SON OF MAN. We endeavour then to make things clear to the *understanding*: and if we fail, we know the reason of it: it is described by the prophet Isaiah: *for it is a people of no UNDERSTANDING: therefore he that made them, will not have mercy on them; and he, that formed them, will show them no favour.* (xxvii. 11.) And again in Hosea: *my people are destroyed for lack of KNOWLEDGE: because thou hast rejected KNOWLEDGE, I will also reject thee.* (iv. 6.) What knowledge does the prophet speak of? Knowledge of things earthly, think you? By no means: but knowledge of the Lord, which is eternal life. (John xvii. 3.) Thus do the Holy Scriptures fix a legible mark on them that perish: While on the other hand, the Lord saith by his prophet Jeremiah to the inhabitants of his own city of Zion: *I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING.* (iii. 15.) It is clear then, that knowledge and understanding is the food for the Lord's people. No empty trash, no smooth flummery, no wild fancy, no ignorance, no delusion will do for them.

But I must not omit to notice the former part of the last quoted scripture: the Lord saith, *I will give you pastors ACCORDING TO MINE HEART*: now what can these words mean,—*according to mine heart*? Certainly they mean such pastors as have been taught by the Lord himself, in his own school. Such alone can teach according to his heart, that is, agreeably with his divine Will; for his will is never revealed to any other for the purpose of feeding his own people. And Peter says of such, that they are *partakers of the divine nature*; (2 Pet. i. 4.) or as the Saviour said to Nicodemus: *born of water and of the spirit*: and being so born, then the Lord saith of them, that they are according to his heart; and consequently in opposition to the corrupt will of fallen

man, and to the thousands of vain preachers, with which the world has always been infested. I must not longer digress ; but proceed to the second head of the text ; viz. *safety* from the danger that impends.

II. And here are three subjects presenting themselves for our consideration. 1. The type, or shadow, the Serpent in the Wilderness. 2. The substance, or antitype ; the Son of Man. 3. And lastly the benefits resulting to them that believe.

1. We begin with the Serpent in the Wilderness, the story of which will be found in the book of Numbers. (xli.) It appears that, when the soul of the people was upon one occasion much discouraged, *they spake against God, and against Moses. And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, and much people of Israel died. (v. 6.)* In this distress, as was usual, they cried for relief. And the Lord, whose ears are ever open to true prayer, said unto Moses ; *Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole : and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole ; and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.* The first thing that strikes us here, is the very curious manner in which the Lord determined to heal his suffering people. As Naaman the Syrian indignantly asked : *are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel ? May I not wash in them and be clean ?* (2 Kings v. 12.) So any natural man might with equal anger be inclined to say ; why make a serpent of brass ? and why need the people look on such an inanimate thing to be cured ? The Lord could certainly have healed the deadly bites of these fiery serpents perfectly well without any such means, had it been his pleasure so to do. The answer to such inquiry is, that the brazen serpent was made solely with the view of prefiguring our blessed Redeemer. And with the same view was ordained the whole of the cere-

monial law. Before the birth of Christ : before God actually *took upon him the form of a servant* : (Phil. ii. 7.) and before his very presence as such could be enjoyed ; he took infinite pains to confirm his oft repeated promise, by outward signs of every kind ; in order that his chosen people might always have strong grounds for putting their whole confidence in his eternal love. And the whole of this circumstance shews, that the people, who will ever place their confidence in the Messiah, are only those, who feel themselves lost on account of their sins ; those who acutely feel the truth of James's words : *Sin when it is finished bringeth forth death.* (i. 15 :) The serpents which bit the people shadow out to us, the Subtle Serpent, which we read of in Genesis and in the Revelation, which stung our first parents, and filled both their souls and bodies with the deadly venom of sin. The people in the wilderness feeling themselves actually at death's door were glad of any remedy whatever ; and did not refuse to look at the serpent of brass, in order to preserve their lives ; by which is prefigured the application of the law to the souls of the sons of Adam. When the Spirit of God is pleased to arrest a sinner by working in his heart a true faith in the purity of the spiritual law ; that sinner is brought to a point as to the certainty of his eternally perishing, unless he finds a physician, that can take out the whole of his sins : and he is made as willing to flee for refuge unto Christ, breaking through every hindrance, as these people of old were made willing to look up for healing unto the serpent of brass.

Now in answer to the question of Naaman the Syrian, to which I have alluded ; the reason why he could not be healed in any other waters than the waters of Israel, was because those waters prefigured the pure stream of the Word of God, which is ever flowing from his throne ; (Rev. xxi. 1.) and through the means of his ministering servants extends to every inhabitant of his sacred city of Zion. This is the only water that can penetrate through the leprous soul, and

purify it from its uncleanness: *Ye are clean*, said the Redeemer to his disciples, *through the word which I have spoken unto you.* (John xv. 3.) Which cleansing word this same Apostle John thus speaks of in the Revelation: *And he shewed me a pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.* This water of life is here represented to be as clear as crystal, and as coming immediately from God, which signifies that it is totally unmixed with any false doctrine or heresy; and consequently that it can only be administered by his own sufficient ministers. Naaman's question is not at all an uncommon one: we hear it asked over again every day: Why is it not as well to go to this church, as to that church; to this chapel, as to that chapel? If we do but go and hear, is not that quite enough? In the outward appearance certainly there may be little or no difference, as it regards the generality of mankind; but in answer to all such questions, I must say, that none but the real waters of Israel can ever profit any one human soul; and that these waters are only to be found in Israel, that is, in the true invisible and spiritual church of God and of the Lamb.

Without further delay I proceed to the antitype, the Son of MAN, who must be lifted up, as Moses lifted up the Serpent in the Wilderness.

2. By the *Son of Man* our Lord meant himself: that was the title, which while he dwelt below, he almost invariably gave to himself. And it is clear to me that he had very particular reasons for it. The chief of which was this: viz. to denote the reality of his Manhood: to denote that he is truly and perfectly bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh: that is to say, one of our own brethren: the lineal descendant of David King of Israel; according to his own words to John in the Revelation; *I am the root, and the offspring of David.* (xxii. 16.) First, the root, which denotes his Godhead; and then the offspring, which denotes his Manhood.

There have been self-made preachers in all ages, who have denied the reality of Christ's Manhood; most awfully and blasphemously asserting a pre-existence of his human soul; and in consequence utterly denying him to be, what he constantly affirmed himself to be,—viz. the *Son of Man*. There are many of these heretics in the present day; and some even in this neighbourhood. But as the Scriptures exhibit him unto us, so we testify that he is; '*perfect God, and perfect Man; God of the substance of his Father, before all worlds; and Man of the substance of his Mother, born in the world.*'

But why should our blessed Lord lay such particular emphasis upon the reality of his human nature? Why, to draw convicted and self-abased sinners unto him. He says; *I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.* (John xii. 32.) It is in great measure by clear revelations of his gracious Manhood, that he draws them. In taking our nature upon him, the proof of his unspeakable love shines forth in the strongest light. A trembling sinner could never think of drawing near to God abstractedly viewed: his whole thoughts would be, where he could possibly hide himself from his all-seeing eye of infinite purity. But the Apostle Paul, who was possessed of true wisdom, lays hold of the advantage of his Manhood to exhort the trembling sinner to venture into his sacred presence, saying: *for we have not a high-priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come BOLDLY unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.* (Heb. iv. 15, 16.) The conclusion of coming boldly, is evidently drawn from a clear view of the tenderness of the man Christ Jesus. Observe, the Apostle says, yet without sin: and this is the only difference between him and us, in regard to his Manhood.

But it may next be asked, how could a serpent, which is

the very picture and image of the Devil, prefigure Christ, the pure and sinless Redeemer? Now mark well, what I am about to say in answer to this question; for I am at this time in the very act of lifting up the *Son of Man*, to the view of the perishing sinner. As perfect holiness is the image of the Almighty Creator; so sin is the image of the Devil. The *spotless* Redeemer then was made *sin*. Thus Paul tells the Corinthians; (2. v. 21.) *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin.* How strong and clear the Apostle is upon the point! If he had been writing to the Corinthians on this very subject of the brazen serpent, he could not have expressed himself more to the purpose. He affirms that Christ *knew no sin*; and yet assures us that God made him sin. Which is as much as to say that God made him the very image of the Devil, the crooked serpent. But how did he make him sin? By laying all the sins of his people to his charge; and punishing him for them, as if he himself had been the actual transgressor. When all these sins were laid to his charge, then the eye of infinite and inflexible justice could view him in no other light, than as the chief of sinners; and accordingly punished him without sparing him in the least degree: as Paul writes to the Romans: *he that spared not his own son.* (viii. 32.) Well indeed might this very tenderest of all the human race cry to his Father; that, if possible, this cup might pass from him! (Matt. xxvi. 9.) I say *the very tenderest*, as to his manhood, of all the human race: because by reason of his knowing no sin, his feelings are far more acute, than those of any proud, uplifted, *fallen* son of Adam ever could be: more acute certainly, in every respect, and particularly on the subject of the abominable and awful nature of sin. Well might this tenderest of the human race from excessive weakness, sweat great drops of blood! (Luke xxii. 44.) Under such an enormous load well might his heart burst upon the cross! The prophet Isaiah is not a whit behind the Apostle in speaking of the low estate to

which Immanuel was reduced in the great work of redemption. *The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all: with this prophet: (liii. 6.) and, it pleased the Lord to bruise him. (v. 10.)* Surely then, if he was thus counted the chief transgressor, Moses, by divine direction, might exceedingly well and accurately prefigure him in the shape of the Devil, undergoing due punishment; for the serpent and the Devil are but one. Where no sin is, there no punishment can ever come: God is too just for that. As Christ was punished, and had no sin of his own, the conclusion clearly follows, that he paid for others.

Well then, as Moses lifted up the Serpent in the Wilderness, ~~even so~~ must the Son of Man be lifted up: Observe, ~~even so~~; and this is exactly what I have now been doing, as far as the Spirit of the Lord hath instructed me in this amazing mystery. The words,—~~even so~~, assure us, that the Son of Man must be lifted up precisely in the same character, as that in which Moses lifted up the Serpent, and also for the same purpose. And that character evidently was, as the chief of sinners: the chief of sinners, by imputation, mind. And the purpose was for the healing of the people, which will be spoken of presently. It is impossible to charge us with error, in holding forth the brazen Serpent as a type of Christ; for his own words to Nicodemus decide that point; but if he in lying under the weight of our sins was not counted the transgressor, then the Serpent could be no type of him at all; but the very reverse. Because the Serpent is *crooked*; or *sinful*: whereas the Son of Man is not only *upright*; or *holy*: but the express image of the person of God. (Heb. i. 3.)

With regard to lifting him up, that can only be done by the pure preaching of the gospel. And this is what we do every time we preach, unless we be preachers of vanity. It is most true, that he was once on Mount Calvary actually lifted up to the view of the external eye; and also after-

wards lifted up to his throne of glory ; and so freed, together with all his children in him, from his state of hard bondage, as a debtor under the law. But if it is necessary for every soul, that is perishing by reason of the venom of sin, to have a sight of the crucified Saviour, he must of course be lifted up again in the view of all such. And we find that, when Paul was in Galatia, this was his employment. *O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, BEFORE WHOSE EYES JESUS CHRIST HATH BEEN EVIDENTLY SET FORTH, CRUCIFIED AMONG YOU?* (Gal. iii. 1.) What *eyes* do you think these were, before which Jesus Christ had been evidently set forth? The eyes of the inward man, or Spirit of Faith. And this Paul did by lifting him up ; that is, by preaching him fully and truly. He told these Galatians all that he himself knew of the great person, whom he was preaching : all that God had revealed to himself came forth in his discourses to the people. He tells these same Galatians in the first chapter, that God had revealed his Son in him, for the very purpose of preaching him among the heathen. And it was by virtue of such revelation alone, that Paul was enabled to preach Christ truly. For no man by his own searching can ever find out what he truly is in any respect. All the Preachers of the Christian Religion, no matter whether they be many, or they be few ; all the Preachers, who have not had the Son of God revealed in them, are, and must be Preachers of error, heresy, and delusion : and lead unhappy sinners in the broad way down to endless misery. *MARVEL NOT that I said unto thee, ye must be born again*, said the Saviour to the astonished Nicodemus. Which being born again is, what Paul means by having the Son of God revealed within : and which is not only absolutely necessary to the true and profitable Preacher : but also to every individual soul, in order to his being made a partaker of salvation. Having now shewn you a little of the manner in which the Son of Man is lifted up, as well as a little of

the qualifications of the persons, that are trusted with this excellent, this most noble, this solemn employment, I come in the last place to treat of the benefits resulting therefrom to them, that believe.

3. **ETERNAL LIFE** is set forth in the text, to be the gift, which Christ hath purchased. Eternal life is a blessing, of which we shall never be able to form any adequate conceptions, as long as we dwell in a body of corruption. But there are some faint beams of it, which at times shine through into the souls of the Saints, and which make them exceedingly happy even in the prospect of that glory, which God hath sworn unto them, that they shall hereafter enjoy. One of these beams of glory was felt by the Apostle John, when he said : *Beloved, now are we the Sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be : but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him ; for we shall see him, as he is.* (1. iii. 2.) This much we know, saith John ; we shall be like him : like our Maker ; perfectly holy, and perfectly happy : in the presence of eternal love, eternal goodness, and eternal perfection. Only conceive what a height of honor and glory is this, for a wretched mortal man to be raised unto ! We shall then dwell in a body, that is incorruptible ; and sit down, as our Lord tells us, together with him on his throne. (Rev. iii. 21.) Paul was quite right in telling the Romans,—that he reckoned the sufferings of this present time not worthy to be compared with the glory, which shall be revealed in us. (Rom. viii. 18.) Very many, and very severe were the sufferings of this Apostle in his great work of evangelizing sinners ; yet he had such an internal view of the riches of his inheritance in glory, that he was sustained under the weight of all his trials ; and not only sustained ; he even counted nothing of them. And yet what he, or any other Apostle could see of eternal life here below, would be found infinitely short of the reality, when he came into the enjoyment of it. But sinners, who feel them-

selves perishing, are filled, and that most justly, with such a dread of eternal death, that they would be thankful to be saved from it, if possible, at any rate, even if the glory of eternal life were not a hundredth part of what it is revealed to be.

The question now occurs, on whom is this invaluable blessing bestowed? On him *whosoever believeth* in the Son of Man, when he seeth him lifted up on the pole of the gospel. Mark well: for what possible purpose can he be lifted up; but to be viewed;—to be viewed by the sick in order to procure healing; by the *perishing*, in order to procure *life*? And here we have confirmed, in the conversation of Jesus with Nicodemus; in the text itself, those observations made before we entered regularly into the subject;—that strictly speaking, there must be *sight* of an object, before true faith can be placed in it; or a firm testimony can be borne respecting it: we **TESTIFY** *that we have SEEN*. (John iii. 11.) The word *whosoever* is of an unlimited signification; and is common in the writings of this Apostle. We find him writing in the Revelation: **WHOSOEVER WILL, let him take the water of life freely.** (xxii. 17.) *Whosoever*; whether he be Jew or Gentile, Christian or Heathen, Protestant or Catholic, King or beggar, old or young, male or female, bond or free. That *whosoever believeth* in him should not perish. The following word *believeth* however fixes boundaries to it; and assigns the blessing of eternal life to all believers, and to them only: that is, to all those, who from the knowledge, which they have obtained of the Son of Man, by a true view of him, bruised upon the pole, are enabled to place their whole confidence in him, and in nothing else but in him, in all times of danger, and especially in that most trying time, the hour of death.

And when they have thus become believers, we learn from the scriptures, that they lose their former denominations, and receive the new name of Christian, or *anointed* one: *where*

there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all. (Col. iii. 11.) You see then on whom the blessing is bestowed: viz. on the believer. And the scriptures further inform us, that **FAITH** is *the gift of God.* (Eph. ii. 8.) What does that mean,—*the gift of God?* Is there not naturally a power in the sons of men to believe, or place their confidence in Christ? There certainly is not: by no means. Man by nature knows neither *who*, nor *what* he is: and still worse, he is ignorant of his need of such a person; and makes no inquiry respecting him; at least but in a very heedless way. Assuredly the state of nature is a state of total unbelief. The Lord God said unto man: *in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.* (Gen. ii. 17.) *The serpent said unto the woman, ye shall not surely die.* (iii. 4.). The word of the latter was believed in preference to the word of the former: and as a just punishment of the grievous insult offered to his Maker, man was stript of all power to believe the divine word; and the spirit of unbelief, which makes God a liar, has ever since been engraven on his soul in the room of it. (1. John v. 10.) And that is the very reason of the absolute necessity, which the Lord insisted upon to Nicodemus, the absolute necessity of being born again: notwithstanding that ruler's total unbelief of the possibility of such a thing. *The wind*, that is, the spirit of God, *bloweth where it listeth*: man hath no power over it, to direct it where it should go; but on whomsoever it alighteth, that man is made to feel its power: he is awakened to a sense of his danger, and is by degrees made willing to be saved; not by his own natural powers, which under such a teacher he soon learns to be impossible, but in the way of God's appointment; by grace. When this spirit of power has stripped him of all his own strength, and all his own will, and brought him to feel himself to be nothing but a thing created; (Rev. iv. 11.) brought him to be as passive as a new-born infant; then

all at once his eyes are opened, he lifts them up ; and in the spirit of faith gazes on the Son of Man, writhing underneath that load, which otherwise would have sunk himself into the bottomless pit. A new and spiritual power is now given unto him, to obey the voice of the Lord, calling unto him ; *Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.* (Isa. xlv. 22.) He has received new eyes, with them he looks, and he is saved ; and is for ever united by the indissoluble tie of love and gratitude to his gracious Redeemer. Amen.

April 27.—Afternoon.

SERMON III.

*As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father ;
so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.—JOHN vi. 57.*

THE excellence of any thing, and in a great measure the beauty also, depend upon its principles ; that from which it arises : thus, if it be a building, unless the foundation be secure, it is liable to fall : if it be a stream, unless the fountain of it be pure, the flowing waters therefrom must be pernicious : if it be a tree, unless the root be good, neither the branches, nor the fruit can partake of their proper soundness : or if it be the measures of the body political, unless they originate in sound discretion, they must tend to the injury of that body. This is very evident only from the common exercise of our rational faculties. But all things earthly have an end : whether they be buildings, however strong may be their foundation : whether they be plants, however sound their root : whether they be governments, however wisely conducted : or it be even the earth itself :

they all have an end. And why? A solemn question! and which it most deeply concerns every individual to be able to answer truly; as each of us forms a part of this perishing earth. You will tell me: because it is natural for them to decay; they cannot live for ever: they have not eternal life in them. But to such an answer, I must rejoin; why have they not eternal life in them? The Eternal Being made them by his word; and by the same word he could as easily have for ever sustained them. The truth is; He made this whole time-creation for a shadow, or pattern of a new and endless creation. (Isa. lxvi. 22.) And as it was but a pattern, he did not secure the foundation; he left it to its own strength, which indeed was soon proved to be no strength; but weakness, by Satan's quick success in undermining it. The 'tree of life,' the eternal Son, an inexhaustible fountain, an ever-during foundation, was proposed to man for his acceptance. (Gen. ii. 9.) Man through Satan's subtlety preferred that tree, which was prohibited; and God his Maker most justly cursed him, as we read in Gen. iii., together with the whole first, or time-creation. Hence we hear the prophet exclaim: *thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.* (Hosea xiv. 1.) And since man has fallen by his iniquity; at the appointed time, to dust he must return. In the language of another prophet, he hath forsaken God, 'the fountain of living waters:' (Jer. xvii. 13.) and if he has departed from that fountain, he cannot of course draw LIFE. And in consequence of man's iniquity and God's purity, the *divine anger* is justly placed between him and 'the tree of life;' as is represented by the symbol of the 'flaming sword, which turned every way.' (Gen. iii. 24.) The whole having thus lost its foundation, viz.—the upright, *created* principle of law-life,—'of dressing and keeping the garden of Eden;' (ii. 15.) the man must be driven out from thence, that is, the divine friendship must be withdrawn, in order to make way for divine justice. And justice, which in this case is—'fury,' (Levit. xxvi. 28. and passim.) imme-

diately stepped into its place. But the attributes of the Almighty have each of them, their own infinite glory and splendor; and their own sphere of action, where they are displayed in all their fulness, the one not interfering with the other in the least degree. No sooner had justice been in part exercised, than mercy also began to appear; and a new way was again cut out, by which fallen and perishing man might be restored to the fountain of life; and that without a possibility of ever more having it in his power to depart from it. (Isa. liv. 10. and Jer. xxxii. 40. and passim.) This new way is indeed fully, though at the same time very concisely declared in the text.

The Apostle John, owing to his very homely and very pointed style of writing, was denominated—*the Barbarian*, by the refined Greeks, who quoted, or alluded to to him in the primitive ages. And Barbarian no doubt he was to them, being wholly unintelligible; but to us he is the deepest of divines. On perusing his gospel, we find that it contains very little of history: it is composed almost entirely of the discourses of the Saviour either with the unbelieving Jews; or with his own disciples: and almost every verse contains some divine mystery. And what still adds to its value is, that when the apostle wrote, his understanding in 'the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven' was arrived at very great maturity; for he did not take up his pen till the close of the first century; many years after the other apostles had all suffered martyrdom, and entered into their eternal rest: and even many years after the destruction of Jerusalem, and the total abolition of the typical daily sacrifice. The verse which I have read to you exhibits to us the course of the stream of **LIFE**, from the fountain to the extremity; of real endless *life*; not this shadow, or dream, which passeth, as a watch in the night. (Ps. xc. 4.)

I. This stream begins with the Father.

II. It flows down through the Son.

III. And it ends in uniting, by the means of this new channel, them that had been driven afar off.

According to the measure of the Spirit of Truth bestowed on me, I shall discuss each of these three points separately in the order in which they stand in the text. I. *As the living Father hath sent me.*—1. It will be found useful to inquire in the first place, why Christ calls God the **LIVING** Father. Certainly to contrast him with our common father Adam, who might with equal truth be called a *dead* father, since by his sin *death passed upon all men.* (Rom. v. 12.) The Jews conceived, and insisted upon it, that the blessed Redeemer came from Adam through the means of a human father like themselves;—and rejected with the utmost contempt and scorn, as they do to this day, his doctrine of making himself equal with God. (John x. 33. Phil. ii. 6.) Adam's upright and pure spirit of life, which God breathed into him, (Gen. ii. 7.) was committed to his own trust and management. *And the LORD God took the Man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it, and to keep it.* (v. 15.) If he had not failed, he most certainly would have been rewarded, instead of punished, as he immediately was, and as he still is in his posterity: whence arises the lamentation: *mine own vineyard have I not kept.* (Cant. i. 6.) The new garden of **ETERNAL LIFE**, which is obtained from the *living* Father, is entrusted to the care of a very different husbandman; one that fully ensures its safety from briars and thorns and every noxious weed, or pestilential element: *My Father is the HUSBANDMAN: saith our Lord.* (John xiv. 1. and Isa. xxvii. 2, 3, 4.) Hence it is, that our hearts respond in divine symphony to the prophet's harmonious voice. *In that day sing ye unto her. A vineyard of red wine. I THE LORD DO KEEP IT; I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.* Good reason indeed then may we discern; we, who have been made partakers of death, by our Father Adam, good reason may we discern for the particular emphasis, which our Lord

lays upon the term *living*, thus calling his Father,—the *living* Father.

Should any one object to me, as carnally minded, and ignorant men will be inclined to do, that the vineyard referred to in the Song of Solomon, is 'the vineyard of the house of Israel,' which 'the Lord of hosts' had planted with such care and pains. (Isa. v.) I answer him, that the planting of that house in 'the holy land,' and the complete eradication of them again out of that land, when it had become too evident, that they could not dress and keep that vineyard, was designed for nothing more than a figure to us, of our having been once planted, or placed, in our father Adam, in the garden of Eden, and driven thence, as soon as our utter incapacity to keep it had been fully demonstrated by an actual failure. And the whole of this lower creation together, from first to last, was never designed by our Maker for any thing beyond, or more than, a figure of the eternal life, that is given through Christ to perishing sinners. And vain indeed then is fallen man, and worse than mad, in the end, he will find himself to have been, who giveth up his whole time and care to the shadow, in total neglect and contempt of the substance.

2. In the next place, Jesus spake these words in a dispute with the ignorant Jews, to prove his own assertion of being the *living* bread from heaven. (v. 32, 33, 34, 35, and 51.) *They murmured at him, because he said ; I am the bread which came down from heaven. (v. 41.)* And not only so ; but even 'many of his disciples finally forsook him, from that time.' (v. 66.) 'He is nothing more than the son of Joseph ;' said they : 'we are well acquainted with his relations : whence then ariseth all this presumption and vanity in the man ?' But as he told them upon another occasion, they were quite mistaken : 'they neither knew him, nor his Father.' (viii. 19.) 'I am not, as you ignorantly suppose, the son of Joseph : *I came down from heaven. (vi. 38.)* A

very different Father sent me; none less than the *living* Father; the author and fountain of all life. And since I did come down from him into the world, I am certainly not of the earth, as even John the Baptist testified unto you: (iii. 31.) therefore, murmur or not, I am nevertheless the bread which came down from heaven.'

What will, what can, the awful Socinians answer us to these things? Their great Doctor (Lardner) would attempt to assure us, that this Apostle in writing his gospel had no view to the refuting of their miserable and empty scheme of doctrine. I assert from the clearest and most forcible conviction, that every chapter proves to us over and over again, that in writing, the Apostle's main view was the refutation of them, and of the opposite scheme of the Docetæ, or Gnostics; both of whom swarmed at that time in Ephesus and the adjacent region, where John's residence also then was. John was by no means given to the employment of the pen. He had been a preacher for about sixty years before he took it up. And it is evident, that the increasing boldness of Cerinthus and his fellow-heretics at length laid upon him the necessity of defending his Master's honour in this way also, as well as by the preaching of the living word; and of leaving to the Church weapons to arm her against her enemies for all future ages.

3. There is one more point of view in which the sense of this word—*living*—is to be considered: we find it applied to the Almighty creator throughout the Old Testament: and it was so applied to distinguish him from the gods of the Gentiles. Every nation had, and, where christianity has not been received, still has its own gods; but then they are *dead* gods and *molten* gods, gods of no power, nor life: the God of Israel being the only *living* God in all the earth. (2. Kings xvii. 29. Isa. viii. 19. Exod. xxxiv. 17.) And because there is no life in any of the gods, of any of the nations, JAHOVAH usually swore by himself in this form—as *I LIVE*, saith the

LORD: and the form of the prophets was—as *the LORD LIVETH.* (Passim.) An Emperor of Rome, Augustus Cæsar, thought no doubt, he made a very clever answer to them, that invited him to pay a visit to the god of the Ægyptians, when in that country: ‘the Romans,’ replied he, ‘worship the gods, and not beasts:’ while at the same time the Roman gods were even more blind and more dead than the Ægyptian ox, which was a living animal. The Persians have from very ancient times made the fire their god; and are exceedingly lifted up with their idolatry, holding in the most sovereign contempt the Roman as well as the Egyptian gods; whereas the fire is but an inanimate part of the LORD’s creation. Having been thus led to speak of idolatry, I shall just mention one more species of it, and that the most degrading of all, viz. the idolatry of the Church of Rome. What do you think they make to be their god? Why, a piece of bread. They actually prostrate themselves before a piece of bread, which they afterwards DEVOUR. What would the prophet Isaiah have said to this? He burns with great zeal against his besotted neighbours; but there was nothing equal to this in his day. *None considereth in his heart, saith he, neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of it in the fire; yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh, and EATEN it; and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? SHALL I FALL DOWN TO THE STOCK OF A TREE?* (xliv. 19.) The LORD by his prophet had indeed good reason so to speak; nevertheless it is very evident, that there is no idolatry in the whole world, which reduces man so much to a level with the brute creation, as this of the Church of Rome. And yet in this very degenerate age there are Protestants, who doubt whether or not they shall pronounce the Church of Rome idolatrous. However well it is for them that know, and worship the God of Israel, the only living God, who is a very jealous God.

4. I shall now notice the very marked difference, between

Christ's manner of speaking of God, and the manner in which the prophets spake of him. It was not with them—the *living Father*; nor *my Father*; but—the *living God*, and *thus saith the LORD*. What a different idea does the term *Father* convey to us Sons of Men! It conveys an idea of the closest possible relationship that can exist between two persons. Hence it is most evident; that Jesus of Nazareth stood in a widely different situation with regard to God, from that in which the prophets stood. In short he wished to impress upon the minds of them that heard him, that he was truly the Son of God; and if the Son of God, consequently truly God himself; for whatever the Father is, that the Son must be, common sense teaches us. In the preceding sermon, we contemplated him, as *Son of Man*, truly born of Mary: now we are taking a view of him as the Mighty God of Jacob: and so lifting him up upon the pole again; and turning him over and over, that the serpent-bitten dying sinner may look, and live.

This doctrine however was so strange, so unintelligible, so mysterious, and so exceedingly offensive to the Jews, that it seems to have been the chief thing, which stirred them up to crucify the LORD. *Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also THAT GOD WAS HIS FATHER, making himself equal with God.* (John v. 18.) Behold what an extreme repugnance there was in the minds of these people to receive the promised Messiah, 'the hope of Israel,' in his true character! And in the latter part of the tenth chapter, it is still more fully shewn how abominable the use, by the Messiah, of this term *Father*, did appear to them: *for a good work we stone thee not, said they, but for blasphemy, and because that thou, BEING A MAN, MAKEST THYSELF GOD.* (33.) We on the other hand find it a chief reason to love the Lord the most for that, for which his enemies most hated him. Christ by being the Son of God hath raised us sinful mortals to a height

infinitely beyond that, though perfect state, in which we were created in Adam. Christ is the Son of God, and we well know that he is our brother: (Heb. i. 11, 12, & 17, & *passim*,) into what a close relationship then, does this bring us with the Eternal triune Jehovah: we being the brethren of the Son of God, become also ourselves the Sons of God: and so this illustrious Apostle John assures us in plain terms, in his first chapter: *as many as received him, to them gave he power to become THE SONS OF GOD.* (12.) He is no less clear and plain in his first epistle, saying; *beloved now ARE WE THE SONS OF GOD.* (iii. 2.) And do not imagine that John is the only Apostle, that speaks such language. Let us for one moment listen to Paul: *God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that WE MIGHT RECEIVE THE ADOPTION OF SONS. AND BECAUSE YE ARE SONS God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying—Abba, FATHER.* (Gal. iv. 4, 5, 6.) Paul it seems was very sensible of the new situation, in which he stood with his Maker, since the Son of God had redeemed him. He could now address him in the language of a child to a parent: *MY FATHER.* If you take notice of the prayers of the prophets under the old dispensation, you will find that they are unable to make so close an approach to their Maker: they generally began,—*LORD God of Abraham, &c.*: or as Daniel in the ninth chapter,—*O Lord the great and dreadful God.* To the redeemed sinner then, who has received new eyes, there is a most peculiar beauty in the new mode of prayer taught by Christ, beginning with,—*OUR FATHER.* This is not an unmeaning term, be assured. It denotes such a union between God and his children, as the world cannot conceive: it is the lively sense of this great goodness, that assures our souls, that ‘God hath raised us up together with Christ, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.’ (Eph. ii. 6.) It is in a great measure this adoption of Sons, wherein the glory of the gospel ex-

celleth the glory of the Law ; so that the latter had no glory, *by reason of the glory that excelleth.* (2 Cor. iii. 10.) Well might this venerable Apostle John lay an exceeding emphasis upon the greater glory of the new dispensation, and say,—*the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ :* (i. 17.) grace indeed ! to be received in such a way of mercy into the house of our Father, all claim to favour from whom we had entirely forfeited : so that the former grace of the Law was swallowed up in the new grace of the gospel : *of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.* The Israelites had indeed great grace, in this respect ; they could approach the *Living God*, which no other nation on earth could do : of all the nations they alone enjoyed the presence of Jehovah dwelling among them. (Deut. iv. 7, 8.) But the Christians, the anointed ones, have far greater grace, in that they can approach him, through his well-beloved Son, with an endearing appellation, which betokeneth an indissoluble union : therefore saith John, we have received *grace for grace* ; the superior grace of the gospel, in the room of the less grace of the Law, which was dispensed by Moses. And here we have the reason, why the prophets of old had such an anxious desire to see the day of Christ : they knew that Heaven was to be opened in the latter day ; and the Spirit's longing voice within them was :—*O that thou wert as my brother !* (Cant. viii. 1.) As our brother we have him, and as our brother we embrace him. *I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them.* (Luke x. 24.) And what had these disciples seen ? Nothing less than their Maker in 'the form of a servant,' united with a Son of Judah, a brother of their own : a sight more than sufficient to bow their hearts to the dust in pure adoration, in true spiritual worship. An unspeakable sweetness is distilled into our souls from the consideration, that our Lord and Saviour does stand in this high situation, so as to be duly entitled to say 'that God is his Father, and to make himself equal with God.' This is 'pure

honey from the Rock Christ ;' and we shall not, like the Jews, stone him for it ; but adore him from the very bottom of our souls : adore him, not in the way of rendering him some service : adore him, not with the view of gaining any thing from him ; but adore him, because his love is so great, that we cannot do otherwise.

5. A few words must now be offered upon what the *living Father* hath done : he hath *sent me*, saith the Redeemer : and this he said to convict of unspeakable folly, as well as unbelief and wickedness, all those that reject, or slight him. *I am come in my Father's name and ye receive me not ; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.* (v. 48.) Which receiving of the false preacher, and rejection of the true, is that sin for which no atonement can be made ; for it is the rejection of the very atonement itself ; as it is written,—*he that believeth not shall be damned.* (Mark xvi. 16.) On the other hand the receivers of Christ find sweet consolation from this assurance, that the Father *sent him* into the world : as it proves to us that the love of the Father, and of the Son, is but one love ;—*the Father himself loveth you.* (John xvi. 27.) And when we by faith rest in this assurance, we feel also the truth of the Lord's words to Philip :—*he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.* (xiv. 9.)

II. We come now to the Mediator ; that is, the channel through which the stream of life flows down to us. *I live by the Father*, says our text. In the foregoing chapter we find Jesus at Jerusalem informing the Jews, that—as *the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.* (v. 26.) Which passage is exactly parallel to the one now in hand ; both of them denoting an inferiority of the Son to the Father : The Father is God : the Mediator is both God and Man in one individual person ; and that makes certainly in one respect, a dependance on the Father, which is implied in the two last mentioned scriptures : “equal to the Father, as touching his Godhead : and inferior to the Father, as touching his Manhood.”

CHRIST, the eternal **WORD**, contained the seed of all the elect in him from eternity ; and is therefore called *the beginning of the creation of God* : and also,—*the first-born of every creature*. (Eph. i. 4. Rev. iii. 14. Col. i. 15.) And when he became *man* also, that seed of *ever-during LIFE* was brought forth in his human soul, which animated that soul with a zeal for eternal joys, and a total contempt for ‘all lower things :’ (Heb. xii. 2.) a zeal which in the end entirely consumed him. (John ii. 17. Heb. ix. 14.) And thus it was that the Father gave to him, *to have life in himself* ; even in his **Manhood** ; for as to his **Godhead** he possessed it from eternity. (xvii. 5.) I say even in his **Manhood** ; for although his human soul was pure and sinless from his birth ; yet being *in all points* like that of the first Adam, it could not naturally be possessed of that new spirit, which this Apostle emphatically calls **LIFE** : (Passim.) and often—*eternal life*. This, as it is the gift of God unto us—by Jesus, so also was the *gift* of God to the Man Jesus. This is he that came by water and blood : (1 John v. 6.) by blood, from Mary ; by water, from the seed of the Divine Word. It is by virtue of this gift, that we become true disciples of Christ, true anointed ones, and *partakers of the divine nature*, (2 Pet. i. 4. 1. John ii. 27.) which the first Adam never was, till he was made a new creature : if he had so been, his foundation would have been well secured ; he could never have fallen : for then his root would have been in God. He had it not originally, and when it was proposed to him he rejected it and fell : and therefore we hear Paul thus declaring the superiority of the second Adam : *the first man Adam was made a living soul ; the last Adam a QUICKENING SPIRIT*. (1 Cor. xv. 45.) A quickening spirit indeed he is, because life flows through him into the dead, and quickens them. It must now be clear to the spiritually wise, how the Son lives by the Father. But a few more observations regarding his inferiority I cannot withhold. As pertaining to his **Manhood**

our blessed Lord is but a created being like ourselves ; and it follows, as far below God as ourselves. And in this consists one of the great beauties of the Mediator : was he not as far below God as ourselves, we should never be able to reach up unto God by him ; he could be no Mediator for us. We shall have no difficulty in proving this assertion from the scriptures. In the history of Jacob, out of whose loins our Lord came, we read, that *he dreamed, and behold, a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven : and behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And behold, the Lord stood above it.* (Gen. xxviii. 12, 13.) This was a figure of the Mediator ; the ladder represented his most gracious Manhood : and what I wish you principally to notice here, is, that although the top of it reached to heaven ; yet that it was *set up ON THE EARTH*. Now had it reached only part of the way down towards the earth, none could have ascended and descended on it : it must have been out of the reach of those, who wished to ascend and descend thereby ; but this it was not : it was *set up on the earth*, for any one to ascend and descend, that might wish to go that way : it was out of the reach of no human being ; it was on the earth, and lower than that it could not be. On the view of this, well may we break out into the language of the Psalmist ; and say,—*though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly.* (Ps. cxxxviii. 6.) This typical representation of the Mediator by a ladder, we meet with in *TRUTH* : that is, without the shadow, in the new testament. *And he saith unto Nathaniel, verily, verily, I say unto you, hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon THE SON OF MAN.* (John i. 51.) Here now we find them ascending and descending upon *the Son of Man* : the Son of Man then is in *TRUTH* the ladder, that is *set up on the earth*, whose top reached to heaven. And low enough surely he was, when the shepherds found him helpless in a manger ; on his entrance into the world : and the thief found

him equally weak, helpless and expiring like a malefactor on his departure out of it. Heaven was opened as soon as the Redeemer had finished his work of redemption, making an end of sins. (Dan. ix. 24.) And the angels, mentioned, are the servants, or messengers of Christ. These servants ascend and descend continually, now that heaven is opened unto them; not only for their own increase in spiritual wisdom; but also that they may bring down the bread of life in order to feed the people therewith.

III. The last head of the text remains to be considered: *so he that EATETH ME, even he shall LIVE by me.* LIFE—is what we all have need of; though we do not all at present feel this need. Many, many indeed are quite at ease. However when this vain dream has passed away, we shall feel our need. A certainty too clear to admit of a dispute! *It is appointed unto men once to die.* (Heb. ix. 27.) And we learn from our text, something of the manner in which Christ's true disciples are enabled to enjoy the possession of this real endless life; proving themselves to be united to that channel, through which the quickening stream flows. Christ the Lord has wrought out a complete redemption: but are we to suppose that those, who pay no regard to it; or those, who pay a *little* regard to it, have an interest therein? The supposition is vain! That work occupied above thirty years the very Omnipotent Jehovah, and his thoughts for four thousand years previous to the commencement of the work itself: nay more? it was for that work, and that alone, that he spake this world into being. Well then, indeed, might Paul exclaim—*how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?* (Heb. ii. 3.) Alas! Alas! how indeed! there is no possibility of escaping. I say the great work of Redemption is worthy of more than all the admiration and attention that man can bestow upon it. Our main business then in considering this last portion of our subject will be to examine into what our Lord means by *eating him*. The inspired

writers make very frequent use of metaphors and figures of speech, whereby the better to illustrate the things of God, and make them plain to the understandings of man. Jesus, having miraculously fed the multitude was followed by them even across the sea of Tiberias; upon which he said unto them,—*verily, verily, I say unto you, ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did EAT of the LOAVES and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat, which endureth unto everlasting life.* (John vi. 26, 27,) And thence he laid hold of the opportunity of discoursing with them upon the subject of the kingdom of heaven under that figure of speech. We all well know, that bread literally sustains our mortal bodies, whence it has been emphatically denominated ‘the staff of life.’ Christ is the sustainer of our souls: therefore he may well be called bread in a *spiritual sense*: and when the people became exceedingly offended at him for saying,—*the bread that I will give is my flesh,* (51.) so carnally minded; so excessively dull of understanding were they, that in answer to their question, *how can this man give us his flesh to eat?* (52.) he told them,—*the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.* (63.)

Let us now turn to the seventeenth chapter and learn how to eat this living bread: *this is LIFE ETERNAL, that THEY MIGHT KNOW THEE the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent:* (3.) from which it appears, that to have the *knowledge* of God and his son, is the very same thing as to *eat* him. Upon mankind in general, *the word of the Lord* has but little effect; they believe it not; they disregard it; but where the eternal spirit of truth by the word lays hold of a sinner’s heart, he causes that soul to listen with the deepest attention, and to ruminate upon what he has heard, from time to time, cutting down, or mortifying his earthly affections one after another, till at last he is made quite *willing* to forsake all, and to take up his cross and follow his

crucified Lord. When this will is truly and effectually wrought in the soul ; then the knowledge of the Father and of the Son is wrought : and faith in our salvation springs up of necessary consequence : and this is to eat the Lord : this is to be possessed of the spirit of eternal life. . (1 John v. 13.) *Thy words were found, and I did eat them : and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.* (Jerem. xv. 16.) We are then no longer in heaviness, in hard bondage under the law, from the fear of death, the wages due unto sin ; but see plainly that the infinite justice of God is fully satisfied with the payment, which his Son our Lord has made in our behalf. And as we journey on through this life towards eternity, we still return with fresh appetites to this our heavenly bread. It is not enough to have tasted once : when trial comes on, we are filled with anxiety to know if we shall get safe through ; and this obliges us to have recourse to that bread which revives us, and renews the strength of our souls. The children of God are by no means at ease ; but, like ‘ sheep in the midst of wolves,’ are ever on the alarm ; being beset with enemies and temptations constantly renewed ; and this causes them, by the searching of the Spirit of Truth, to examine and to re-examine their foundation, the *rock Christ* ; to assure their souls afresh that it is really a secure foundation, and also to re-examine if they themselves are truly placed upon this good foundation. We take a review of his undeniable goodness as man, even ‘ pouring out his soul unto death’ for us, and find that as he is perfect he must be true to his own word, and can never turn away his own ‘ near kinsmen.’ We ascend to the top of his Manhood, and there take a view of his Godhead, where we find him to be Omnipotent, able to perform the whole of his gracious will towards the people of his choice. In the scriptures we find that he is fully and accurately held up to view by his Prophets and Apostles, and having power given unto us to ponder them in our hearts, we grow thereby in the knowledge of

God, and of his Son our Saviour, and our faith receives continual increase. And this is the way in which we eat and live by our blessed Lord : and there is no other way in which he can be eat. And it is by the same channel that life must flow to the least member of his sacred body. He giveth of this bread to his ministers, and they are appointed to break it unto the people ; when all they that are hungry satiate their souls, while the rich are sent empty away. Blessed then in conclusion we must pronounce those, who are made partakers of the stream of LIFE ; for through the Mediator they are joined to the Author of all life, a fountain that can never fail, that can never undergo deterioration : and as he lives by the living Father, even so, we eat him, and live by him. Amen.

May 4.—Morning.

SERMON IV.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.—John viii. 51.

It must be acknowledged on all hands, that there is nothing like a good reward for the encouragement of a man in any difficult undertaking. A man that receives inadequate wages will always go very heavily to work, and unless well looked after, will in the end leave it unfinished. For although employment even without remuneration is much better for our health and happiness, than living in idleness and inactivity ; yet the very thought of working for nothing is so exceedingly contrary to our feelings, that there are very few of us, who would not rather languish in ease till we die, than set about a work, which has no reward of any kind attached to it. If we turn our attention to the labourer in the field ; good wages, we perceive, have the effect of making him cheerful in the midst of his toil : if we contemplate the student in letters, in the laws, or the sciences ; the expectation of a

plentiful harvest of honour and emolument removes all his difficulties: or a soldier in the camp, the fruits of glory to be enjoyed in the favour of his Sovereign; and the admiration and gratitude of his country, rouse his courage, and enable him to brave every danger. Or again, let the object of our consideration be—a soldier in another army, in the army of Martyrs; it is the thoughts of victory, the crown of glory, and the seat with Christ upon his throne, (Rev. iii. 21.) that cheer his spirits during the contest, and support him in maintaining the truth against his inveterate foes, the vain world, the corrupt flesh, and the subtle Serpent, the Devil.

The view of his reward at the close of his long and arduous conflict gave sweet consolation to the mind of Paul, who thus in exultance speaks of it to his faithful disciple Timothy: *the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day.* (2 Tim. iv. 6, 7, 8.) This crown it was, which the Apostle could see by the light shining in his soul, that made him count nothing of the severe sufferings of this present time; that made him count nothing even of his life: (Acts xx. 24.) and the view of this crown also it was, that sustained even the great leader of our army, (Rev. xix. 14.) the blessed Saviour himself; who, as we read in the Epistle to the Hebrews, *for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* (xii. 2.) The cross which the Lord endured was very severe; the shame of it was very hard to bear; but the joy that was set before him; the joy of being exalted to rule over all things, was like new wine to his soul, which supported him under the trial.

It is clear then that there is nothing equal to the proposing of a good reward, when any work difficult of accomplishment is required to be executed. And as the most difficult of

all works on this earth, is 'the fighting of the good fight of faith,' so the reward is by far the greatest: viz. as declared in the text,—an exemption from death. *The wages of sin*, we are told, and we know it to be true, *is death*; that is endless torments; (Rom. vi. 23.) but for the wages of righteousness on the other hand; hear what our Lord says: *verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.* In these words there are three very distinct heads.

I. The master.

II. The labourer.

III. And the wages.

I. The master, Jesus the anointed, stands first to be spoken of. 1. In my last discourse to you I pointed out a very important, and a very beautiful distinction between Christ's manner of addressing the people, and that of the prophets, who went before him. And these words—*Verily, verily, I say unto you*,—give me an opportunity of pursuing that subject a little further. The Jews could not help observing with regard to Jesus, that *he taught them as one having authority, and not as the Scribes.* (Matt. vii. 29.) The Scribes were the regular and lawful teachers of the Jewish nation; but owing to their extreme ignorance in the days of the Messiah, like the professors of the present day, they knew not how to teach; they 'reeled to and fro,' from one opinion to another, 'and staggered like drunken men:' but it is not to a comparison between Jesus and the Scribes, that I wish to draw your attention; but between him, and his own true prophets; and to fully establish the doctrine of his godhead, against all Jewish and Socinian heretics; and to prove him in the words of Paul to the Jews, worthy of as much more glory than Moses and the prophets, *as he who hath builded the house, hath more honour than the house.* (Heb. iii. 3.) Observe, the prophets of old invariably introduce their messages to the people with:—*thus saith the Lord*;—which manner of speech shews that *of themselves* they had no autho-

rity; but that all their authority was derived immediately from the LORD. The words, which they spake, indeed were the words of the LORD; because they were taught them by God the Holy Ghost, as the Nicene Creed tells us, 'who spake by the prophets.' It is most true that they did not, like the vast number of false prophets, speak without authority; for then they would have been received; as Jesus observed:—*if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive*: (John v. 43.) they had the very highest authority; but it was derived unto them from above. Whereas Jesus has all authority *in himself*; for he is the Most High; and he never begins his addresses like them, with—*thus saith the LORD*; but with—*Verily, verily, I say unto you*: and, *if a man keep my saying*; not the statutes and ordinances OF THE LORD; but MY SAYING. And as the Jews could not be persuaded, that he was more than man; they were offended, and counted him mad; for they immediately answered him:—NOW WE KNOW THAT THOU HAST A DEVIL. *Abraham is dead, and the prophets, and thou sayest, if a man keeep my saying, he shall never taste of death.* (52.) The conclusion was now clear beyond all question, to their darkened minds, that he had a Devil: the very opposite conclusion to that which they ought to have drawn. *Art THOU greater than our Father Abraham, which is dead?* continued they,—*and the prophets are dead*: WHOM MAKEST THOU THYSELF.

As the Godhead of Christ could not be seen, but by revelation from the Father; (Matt. xvi. 17.) and as these Jews had not such revelation; to any one, who might have told them, that Jesus is God, they would have replied:—'have we not seen him with our eyes; and ought we not to believe our own eyes?' And had he indeed been nothing more than man, their offence at him would have been most just; for such language from a mere man could not by any means be tolerated. How could it be tolerated to hear a mere MORTAL man promise exemption from death, for keeping HIS saying?

How could it be tolerated to hear a mere *mortal* man saying ; — *my sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me : and I GIVE unto them ETERNAL LIFE ?* (John x. 27, 28.) Can any but the Author of life ? can any but the **ETERNAL**, give eternal life ? Not one : by no means. Had Jesus been only what the Jews and Socinians (Unitarians) assert him to be, he must have been the most presumptuous, and most deluded madman, that ever came forth to teach. Will our wretched Socinians then deny his Godhead ? Will they dare to laugh to scorn the idea of his being God, and at the same time profess a high regard for the *Man* Jesus ? Blindest of all blind fools ! The hardened Jews acted more consistently : they slew the man that presumed to be God. The Socinians have the same faith respecting him ; and they *honour* him ; but their imagined honour will be found a thousand times worse than murder.

2. But in the next place let us consider, what benefit can be derived to us from the knowledge of Christ's superiority over the Prophets, that went before him ; for knowledge is but a vain thing, unless we have the power of drawing nourishment therefrom for the health of our souls. The first and great benefit is this, that we have our **MAKER** now in our own shape ; so that we can lay hold of him with our hands ; (1 John i. 1.) we have our Maker now in such a situation, that he does not think himself above the least of us ; and we can go to him in the fullest confidence, knowing that he has not the heart to cast us out ; knowing that our distress is his distress. (John vi. 37. Isa. lxiii. 9.) And the longing desire of his Spouse the Church is accomplished ; even beyond the utmost extent of all her wishes :—*Oh that thou wert as my brother, that sucked the breasts of my Mother ! when I should find thee without I would kiss thee ; yea, I should not be despised.* (Cant. viii. 1.) He is not like a hard-hearted mortal, who can turn a beggar away without granting relief : I know he cannot do it. And because he cannot do it him-

self, his command unto us is :—*Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy in thy land.* (Deut. xv. 11.) We indeed can turn away our faces : alas ! we do it too often ! Because we are hard ; a callousness pervades our souls, owing to their corrupt origin ; but the love and tenderness of the Lord is such, that he *will in no wise cast out* any that come unto him.

The very act of becoming man, and of submitting himself to be slain by his own apostate creatures is ample proof of his love to all those, whose heart of stone is taken out, and replaced, according to Ezekiel's figure of speech, by a heart of flesh. (xi. 19.) 'The apostle John sought no other proof than this ; it was quite enough to melt him with gratitude, and to reconcile him to his forsaken Creator :—*God so loved the world, says he, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* (John iii. 16. and 1. iv. 9.) Thus we see it was the love of God ; and what else could it be, that induced him to be made flesh, and to dwell among us. And the clearer the views, which we have of ourselves as sinful creatures ; and of the distance and Majesty of our Maker above us, the greater and the more astonishing will this love appear.

He it was then, who came with such a love as this, whom the Jews, his own brethren, insulted ; crying,—*whom makest thou thyself ?* and whom the world at large totally neglects, taking no heed to any thing, that he has either said, or done. I must add that there is no summing up the greatness of this blessing ; viz. that our Maker himself speaks unto us from a human heart, and says,—*Verily, verily, I say unto you, &c.* It is the inconceivable greatness of the blessing, that places it beyond the reach of the Socinian's power to believe it. However disbelieve it whosoever may, we will, and must believe it ; yes, and proclaim it too, in defiance of the Devil, and all his blind and unfeeling agents.

3. There is another point regarding Jesus of Nazareth's

superiority above the prophets, which I must not omit briefly to touch upon. Paul who dwells much on this superiority in writing to the Hebrews, says ;—*God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the Fathers BY THE PROPHETS, hath in these last days spoken unto us BY HIS SON.* (Heb. i. 1, 2.) And what is the conclusion, which Paul draws from God's having in these last days spoken unto us by his Son? It is this : *therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things, which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.* (ii. 1.) Most certainly the greater the dignity and authority of the person who speaks ; the more earnest attention does he deserve. And if the dignity and authority of Moses was such, that *every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward ; how shall we escape ;* the Apostle adds, *if we neglect so great salvation ?* That there can be no possibility of escape in such case, our blessed Lord hath himself declared in divers parables, and also in plain language, saying to them that had heard him and slighted his word :—*Woe unto you !* (Matt. xi. 21.) And again : *I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom, in the day of judgment, than for thee.* (24.) These Hebrews, to whom Paul was writing ; were such of the Jews as had professed faith in Jesus ; and it appears from the Apostle's extreme earnestness, in exhorting them to *consider how great this man was,* (vii. 4.) that he found it a hard matter to beat it into their understandings ; respecting the real greatness of this extraordinary man, whom they had beheld dwelling among them. And I must own to you that nothing is harder to believe, than the real truth concerning the Messiah of the Jews : that Paul himself was overpowered at the very thought of it, is evident from his language of amazement to Timothy : *and without controversy great is the mystery of Godliness : God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of Angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.*

(1 Tim. iii. 16.) Such a belief as this, is in short far beyond the reach of fallen nature: neither Peter nor any other man could ever have believed it truly without divine revelation: *flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, saith the Lord to Peter, but my Father which is in heaven.* (Matt. xvi. 17.) You may tell me perhaps, that you most readily and willingly believe it; and therefore there is no necessity for dwelling so long upon such a doctrine here. But, I must answer, that there are two sorts of faith, the one—outward, taught by man; the other—inward, taught of God: the former can stand no trial; the Redeemer's fan will quickly waft it away: (Matt. iii. 12.) the latter is rooted and grounded in the heart; it is pure gold, and no fire can consume it. From this account of the great Redeemer of Israel, I now pass on to the second head of the text.

II. The labourer: *if a man keep my saying.*

1. Let us examine first into the nature of Christ's *saying*, and afterwards we shall see in what manner it is kept. The nature of the Lord's *saying* is *spirit*. *The words that I speak unto you, are SPIRIT.* (John vi. 63.) What does that mean? How do these words of the Lord differ from the words of other men? By looking into the third chapter of this gospel, and thirty-first verse, we shall find some means of explaining the mystery: *he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth.* He that is of the earth, viz., every son of man, Christ alone excepted, who is not of the earth; but *came down from heaven.* (13 & 31.) As is also further beautifully illustrated by Paul: *The first man is of the earth, earthly; the second man is the Lord from heaven.* (1 Cor. xv. 47.) Well then we are all of the earth, and are by nature earthly; in the language of the Psalmist,—‘our souls cleave unto the dust:’ (cxix. 25.) we are body, soul, and spirit, altogether corrupted. And they, that are such, must *speak of the earth*, as John the Baptist says. And what else can they speak of? All the thoughts of an earthly mind must be

occupied in earthly things ; not upon the great Creator, and his sacred mysteries ; but upon the various things of God's Creation, according to every man's various pursuits. And so entirely is this the case, that when the Lord invited man to a great supper,—even the rich sacrifice of his Son ; not one was there found to accept the invitation : *they ALL with one consent began to make excuse* : his piece of ground ; his five yoke of oxen ; or his new wife, were counted sufficient excuses by each perishing mortal, to keep him away from immortal food ; from eternal life. (Luke xiv. 16, &c.)

Thus man 'out of the abundance of his heart speaketh of the earth : ' man's words then are certainly not *spirit*. The Saviour on the other hand never entertained one corrupt thought ; for his soul was free from corruption, and could not receive any such thought. The Saviour's thoughts while even on earth were wholly occupied on the will and work of God, and these were the thoughts which he expressed in words ; for he expressed the feelings of his own heart. That scripture,—*but of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh*,—is as true of him, as it is of every other man. (Matt. xii. 34.) Christ's saying then, being spirit, is of a nature totally opposite to man's word and will : therefore we hear Paul telling the Galatians,—*the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh*. (v. 17.) By the *flesh*, Paul means the earthly and sensual mind of fallen man ; and by the *spirit* he means the mind of Christ, which all believers receive from above. (1 Cor. ii. 16.) We may therefore thus express the Apostle's meaning ;—the mind of man lusteth against the mind of Christ, and the mind of Christ against the mind of man : these two different spirits are also distinguished by the phrases—'the old man,' and 'the new man.' (Eph. iv. 22, 24, & Col. iii. 9, 10.) My view in mentioning these things is to shew that Christ's saying is of a nature, that warreth against man's nature. And indeed if it were not so, there could be no difficulty whatever in keeping it :

there could be no necessity for forsaking all ; nor even any thing : there could be no cross to bear. However the greater the difficulty, the more glorious the victory ; the more splendid the crown.

2. We shall now examine how this saying is kept : and when the glorious wages are considered, as well as the fatal consequences on the other hand ; the extreme importance of keeping it cannot be over-rated : nor can too great an anxiety be manifested, to gain a clear understanding of this part of our subject ; so as to be able with the soul to drink freely of the water of the word of life, and be cleansed thereby, having the internal leprosy completely washed out ; and being numbered with the inhabitants of Zion, not one of whom shall ever say,—*I am sick*. (Isa. xxxiii. 24.)

As it has been already observed that there are two sorts of faith ; but the one altogether unprofitable : so there are two modes of keeping the word of God : the one mode by human power ; the other by divine power. The mode of keeping by human power is exercised, when the doctrines of Christianity are studied and acquired in the same manner, as we study and acquire any of the arts or sciences. In this way we may attain a knowledge of the doctrines of truth, and treasure them up in our memories ; but when our faculties become impaired by age, or by infirmity, or by any other cause, a religion of this kind is assuredly lost : because being kept by the faculties of the mind, when those faculties have lost their strength, every thing, which they once held, must now slip from their grasp. It is evident that a man may, for a time at least, hold fast many things, even the whole letter of scripture, by his own powers ; but his heart will still remain precisely of the same nature, and same substance as when he came into this world. No man can by any means alter himself in that respect. The Pharisees, in the Saviour's days on earth, altered themselves outwardly very much indeed ; so as to appear beautiful ; but he informed them, that

the inside should be made clean, and then the outside would be clean also; by which he meant that if a man had 'the mind of Christ,' his outward walk would also of necessary consequence be like that of Christ. We likewise hear the Psalmist saying,—*thou desirest truth in the INWARD PARTS*; not merely gathered up and stored in the head; but engraven in the soul with the finger of God, and made as inseparable a part of the man, as all his natural feelings, and passions, and faculties are part of him.

The true and effectual keeping of the word of God is then clearly beyond the reach of *human* power: therefore the great consideration is, how the *divine* power is manifested in enabling the sinner to lay hold, and to keep his hold. On searching the scriptures we learn, that God doth all things by his word. By his word he made the first Creation;—*And God said, let there be light, and there was light.* Whatever he said, that was done. His power came forth clothed in language: so that his power and his word commonly denote one and the same thing, always going together. Therefore it is, that we find Paul telling the Romans, that the gospel of Christ is the power of God: (i. 16.) and Peter calls the gospel the word of God: *and this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.* (1. i. 25.) His spiritual and powerful word goeth forth, and accomplisheth just what he pleaseth; whether it be to kill, or to make alive. And where it once entereth into a sinner's hard heart, there it fixes itself; and such a one, having by that means become in part spiritual, having the spiritual word dwelling in him, has acquired the capability of hearing what God saith in his holy law: and as the words of that law are preached unto him, he believes them, and not only believes; but keeps them: they become the food of his soul; his constant meditation; because there is now a new ground prepared in his heart for the words to take root in. And when the divine seed has gained a hold for its root, it is sure in the end 'to bring forth

fruit upwards.' As any bodily sustenance taken internally, through the means of veins and arteries, by degrees pervades the whole body, reaching at length even to the marrow : so when *the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*, has made an incision in the soul, it still keeps sending downwards its roots and fibres, till it pervades the whole soul, and becomes inseparably united with it.

The natural man, we are told, receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God : (1 Cor. ii. 14.) and the cause is evident : there is no ground prepared in his heart, for those things to take root in. And this natural man is by the Saviour exhibited in three different points of view, in his parable of the sower. (Matt. xiii.) There is first the mere hearer of the word, who pays no further regard to it, than to an idle or pleasant tale : the Devil cometh and taketh it from him immediately. Then there is the hearer, that receives it into his head by means of his human abilities : but as it does not get rooted in his heart, when tribulation or persecution ariseth, by and by he is offended : and many awful examples of this description has the present day produced. Then there is a third hearer, who is said to receive the seed among thorns : this is the man, who makes a profession of religion ; but whose heart is at the same time wholly occupied in the cares of this world ; and he becometh unfruitful, saith the Saviour. In fact the word gets no real hold of the heart of him, any more than it does of the two first, by reason of the ground not being broken up. There appears to have been many of this third kind in the days of the prophet Jeremiah, who was commanded to say to *the men of Judah and Jerusalem, break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns.* (iv. 3.) These people would make some outward shew of religion, while their hearts were actually wholly occupied with earthly things. You may depend upon this, that when the word of God takes a real and saving hold of a sinner's heart, it will make him bestow some time upon it : it will be the first

thing in his thoughts, and the last thing too: and earthly things will be suffered only to occupy a secondary and inferior part of his attention; for such a one is made obedient to the Saviour's exhortation: *seek ye first the kingdom of God*: (Matt. vi. 33.) he is made to feel assured, that *one thing, at any rate, is needful*. And this is he, in whose heart the ground is made good: the fourth description of hearer, as set forth in the parable above-mentioned.

But, to shew further how this spiritual word is kept; having once taken root, and fixed itself, it is kept alive there by the quickening power of the Holy Ghost: and its natural occupation is, a diligent searching into the things pertaining to God; for, says the Apostle, *the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God*. (1 Cor. ii. 10.) And as it searcheth, it continually gaineth more knowledge of God, more confirmation in the pure attribute of his inflexible Justice; and in the certain fulfilment of all his word. This knowledge fills the soul with awe and trembling; and the voice of the Psalmist is listened to, when he cries:—*Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still* (iv. 4.) These words are 'pondered in the heart,' they cannot be let go; no more than the man in chains can let go his desire to be loosed. Such a soul is afterwards led by the Eternal spirit to search into the Divine attribute of Mercy; and whatever is discovered unto it in that respect, it lays as fast a hold of, as Jacob laid of the Angel that wrestled with him; saying,—*I will not let thee go, except thou bless me*; and though 'the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint,' yet he was enabled to keep his hold till he received the blessing: (Gen. xxxii. 25, 26.) which typified the consuming of the strength of the mind of the flesh, by the power of the Spirit of Truth; the latter acting as a fire upon the Carnal Mind: so the Romans were taught by Paul,—*if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live*. (viii. 13.) Through the continued operation of this mortifying work, the spirit of

nature entirely loses its strength, whereupon the spirit of grace instantly begins to reign. Such is the manner in which the word of God is kept until the Sinner is brought from under the Law ; the broken Covenant, prefigured by the broken tables. The moment he escapes the Law's dominion, he becomes Christ's freeman ; and the ground of his heart having been well and thoroughly broken up, and prepared by the plough of the Law, it now freely and gladly receives the seed of the word, and brings forth the fruits of faith, and hope, and love, all in due season.

Nothing is more certain than this, that it is not in the power of any human soul to *keep* the saying of the Lord Jesus, nor even to *hear* it in a spiritual sense, unless that soul has previously experienced the application of the Holy Law in divine power. It would be just as reasonable to say that Jesus came before Moses, as it is to say, that we can hear the Gospel spiritually, before we have been taught under the Law. *No man can come to me, saith our Lord, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him.* (John vi. 44.) And as we necessarily come into this world under the Law, God the Father draws us through from under it, bringing us to the very end of it, which is Christ. (Rom. x. 4.)

8. But I have hitherto spoken only of the manner in which the Truth is kept internally, viz. in the sight of God, who 'looketh upon the heart:' I must also touch briefly upon the outward effect produced by the true keeping of the divine word. The believers in Christ, having then received 'the Mind of Christ,' are consequently led in a new path. They are led in the steps of their Redeemer, who hath declared, that *whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.* (Luke xiv. 27.) And this new path, or bearing the cross, is in opposition to the way of the world. Feeling themselves to be heirs of so rich an inheritance as eternal glory, the disciples of the Redeemer cannot relish the things of time and sense: therefore they are called in scrip-

ture, '*strangers and pilgrims on the earth*;' and are said to be seeking a city or country. Perhaps you are not aware that the word *parishioner* (*paroikos*) in its primitive signification, denotes a sojourner, one that has taken up his abode for awhile, in a certain place, which lies in his road towards home.

And as the gracious Redeemer is known to have relieved every one that ever applied to him for relief, so his disciples are ever ready to do their utmost to alleviate the distresses of their fellow-creatures. The question was well asked by the venerable Apostle John:—*how dwelleth the love of God in him, who hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him?* The true disciples feel themselves in continual need of mercy from above, and this feeling is sure to make them tender towards such as may by hard fortune be compelled to need assistance from themselves.

III. The last head of the text now comes under our consideration: *the wages* appointed to be given unto the labourer that keeps the saying of Jesus Christ: *he shall never see death*. The same words nearly were afterwards spoken by Jesus to Martha, the sister of Lazarus: *whosoever liveth, and believeth in me shall never die*. In one sense certainly we must all die, as Paul writes to the Hebrews: *it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment*. Our bodies must indeed return unto the dust, in order that they may be raised again 'in incorruption;' but this decaying and returning to dust of the body shall not be suffered to hurt the soul. So it was said to the Church of Smyrna: *he that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death*. (Rev. ii. 11.) So far from being hurt by it, it will be found to be his deliverance from the bondage of corruption, and his admission into the possession of his glorious inheritance, which has been laid up for him. *I go to prepare a place for you*, (John xiv. 2.) saith the Lord; and having this place clearly before his eye,

he could not consider the passage out of this sinful world into eternal joy, worthy of the name of *death*: therefore saith he, *if a man keep my saying, he shall never see death*. Nor did his true disciples, being in possession of his own mind, ever consider it to be—*death*: they called it—*sleep*: *but some are fallen asleep*, says Paul, when he was speaking of those, who had entered into their rest. And what we usually now denominate a burial-place, was by the primitive Christians invariably called—a sleeping-place; for that is the meaning of the word—*cemetery*;—*a sleeping-place*. Not that the soul ever sleepeth, after it leaveth this world; no such thing; but it is the body, which is considered to have fallen asleep for awhile, because of its lying mouldering in the grave until the resurrection morning. The writings of our venerable Apostle are exceedingly abundant in passages parallel to, and confirmatory of, the soul-reviving doctrine taught by our text. The reason of this was, that John himself had such a bright discovery in his own soul of the certainty and glory of Christ's kingdom. Again he adds;—*blessed and holy is he that hath part in the FIRST RESURRECTION: on such THE SECOND DEATH hath no power*. (Rev. xx. 6.) Now the *first death* was that which took place in Eden, when we all died in Adam. *As in Adam all die*—is a passage of holy writ, that must be familiar to every one of you; and this death has been proved pretty fully in my preceding discourses. The first Adam, the *work*, and the *image* of God, was thrown down in violent anger and broken to pieces: what actually took place as detailed in Genesis, is again held up in figure to the clear view of the children of light in Exodus and Deuteronomy. And observe well, that although the first tables, the very *work*, and the very writing of God, (Exod. xxxii. 16.) were broken in anger, there is no breaking of the second tables, which were *hewn out* by Moses: they were safely placed in the Ark; *AND THERE THEY BE*. (Deut. x. 5.) How very pointed and forcible the Holy Ghost, by the pro-

phet, is in his account of these tables. Take notice of the words *hewn out*; they are designed to shew, that Christ (figured by the second tables) was not *created* or *made* in the manner of the first Adam; but that he was *hewn out* of him, that is, truly conceived, and truly born: therefore truly the *Son of Man*. Well may we adore the divine love in causing the scriptures to be so accurately penned as to feed our souls with true knowledge, and to fully arm us against all blaspheming heretics and their abominable heresies.

But I have been led a little from the point in hand: to return; I was commenting upon the last quoted scripture from John. The first resurrection is that which takes place, when the Spirit of God has wrought a living faith in the soul; and is what I have been describing to you in treating of the second head of our present subject; in shewing how the saying of the Lord is kept. And on the partakers in the *first resurrection*, saith John, *the second death* hath no power. How indeed can it? For such have already 'passed from death unto life:' the bread which they live upon is *living bread, which came down from heaven*. From the immortal nature of the bread, it is impossible that they should die: *he that eateth of this bread shall LIVE FOR EVER*.

But it may be useful to mention also what this *second death* is, which all believers have surely escaped. Both it, and those, whose unhappy lot it is to be sharers in it, are described in the following chapter:—*but the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake, which burneth with fire and brimstone: WHICH IS THE SECOND DEATH.* (v. 8.) As the glory, which is prepared for the righteous, is beyond the heart of man to conceive; so also the misery, which is reserved by the righteous Lord for them, that set at nought his sacred truth, is inconceivable. For this lake, which burneth with fire and brimstone, we learn from the Saviour's own words, is never

quenched. However let the weary labourer in the Lord's vineyard get but a view, in his soul, through the spirit's inward teaching, of the greatness of the wages, that are appointed for him ; and it will be found sufficient to revive his fainting spirits, and to stir him up to embrace the exhortation : *behold I come quickly ; hold that fast, which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.* (Rev. iii. 11.) Amen.

May 18.—Morning.

SERMON V.

Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see, and hear.—Acts ii. 33.

THE believers in Christ in the first ages of Christianity were particularly careful in marking the day, on which the right hand of the Most High was displayed either in conferring any signal mercy, or in inflicting any grievous loss ; and therefore it is, that we still hold in remembrance the day of the birth of our Lord, as well as also the day of his death, and ascension, and this present day of Pentecost, on which, now nearly 1800 years ago, he first furnished his Apostles with power from on high, to be witnesses unto him throughout the world. And such observances are undoubtedly blessed of the Lord ; for by these means he is often pleased to bring to our recollections those proofs of his faithfulness, which, owing to the corruption of our nature, we are too apt, in our pilgrimage through this wilderness, to lose sight of. For let

the ground of the heart be ever so well prepared, yet it requires a continual renewing, as there are always thorns ready to spring up, to demand the attention of the husbandman. The unfruitful branches the husbandman taketh away, saith the Saviour, and the fruitful ones he purgeth, that they may bring forth more fruit: (John xv. 1, 2.) which work of husbandry, he performs by his spirit, which goeth forth with his word. For where words are spoken without the spirit, such are not the words of God, but the words of man. Though they may be precisely what is written in the Bible; yet if not spoken from a spiritual understanding, and from a spiritual feeling, it is no longer the word of the Lord: because his word is not—LETTER; his word is—SPIRIT: and for this reason it is, that a man must be born of water, and the spirit, in order to enter into the kingdom of God. (John iii. 5.) Not merely of water,—the dead letter,—which could never cleanse the leprosy from the soul; but of the all-purifying spirit conveyed by the water, that is, the ministry of the word.

The sacred writers tell us repeatedly, and tell us truly, that it is ‘impossible for God to lie;’ and if we have eyes, we have only to read what he hath promised, and then to look at what he hath accomplished, and we cannot fail to be convinced of his truth, and of his faithfulness. He promised to fallen man, that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of that serpent, which wrought man’s ruin: (Gen. iii. 15.) in the fulness of time the Messiah came forth, ‘made of a woman:’ and when he had finished his great work of bruising the serpent’s head, he then promised; saying:—*ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.* (Acts i. 5.) And it is the anniversary of the fulfilment of this last mentioned promise, which we are at this hour assembled to record. The miraculous manner, in which it was fulfilled, brought together the multitude, who having no understanding of so extraordinary a mystery, when they heard the

Apostles speak with other tongues, *were all amazed and were in doubt, saying one to another, what meaneth this? Others mocking said, these men are full of new wine.* So excessively ignorant is the heart of man by the fall, that it cannot distinguish: so exceedingly hardened is it, that even when it can, from malice it will not distinguish between 'the words of truth and soberness;' (Acts xxvi. 25.) and the words of drunkenness and delusion. However, Peter, like a skilful general, seized the opportunity of proclaiming the truth to the assembled multitude, and explained to them the unheard of circumstance in a most energetic address, from which the words of the text are taken: *therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see, and hear.* Of these words I shall take notice in the manner following.

I. The exaltation of the Lord.

II. His remembrance of his friends, whom he left below, by the fulfilment of his promise.

III. The effects produced by the fulfilment.

I. *Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted.*

1. In order the better to understand what is meant by the Lord's exaltation, let us look a little into his humiliation; that we may see, what a low estate he was exalted from. The beginning of his humiliation is thus forcibly expressed in the hymn called the 'Te Deum': 'thou art the everlasting Son of the Father; when thou tookest upon thee to deliver man, thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb.' The **EVER-LASTING** Son of the Father—is a declaration of faith in his eternal godhead: and though he possessed eternal glory and blessedness; yet he did not abhor the Virgin's womb, in order to make a ladder low enough for cast-out man to get back by another way into the presence of his **MAKER** again. And as Paul tells the Colossians;—*in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;* (ii. 9.) so all the fulness of

the Godhead bodily lay in that Virgin's womb. He might indeed most justly have abhorred it, and left the apostate creature man to eternally perish : but consider it well ; it is a consideration, which ought to bend the iron sinews of man's proud neck : (Isa. xlviii. 4.) he did not abhor the Virgin's womb ; but took up his abode therein. When Moses in the spirit beheld the Lord his Maker in that situation, what effect did it produce on him ? Why he *made haste, and bowed his head towards the earth, and worshipped.* (Exod. xxxiv. 8.) The Lord was pleased to make unto Moses a discovery of his '*back parts,*' by which was signified his humiliation in Christ ; and at this discovery Moses found, he had no power to stand ; his heart was completely melted by the view of the unspeakable loving-kindness of his Maker, and down he fell. The Lord had said unto him, *thou canst not see my face :* by his face is there denoted the fulness of the justice of God abstractedly considered : and this no sinful creature can possibly look upon. He can only be viewed by fallen creatures in his mercy in Christ : as Peter observed to the rulers and elders of Israel ;—*there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.* (Acts iv. 12.) This is the only way, in which man can be restored to fellowship with his Maker ; and is what Paul calls *a new and living way.* (Heb. x. 20) After the Lord had been brought forth and laid in a manger, every step through life brought him still lower in humiliation, till at length under the weight of the enormous load of the transgressions of all his people, he expired upon the cross : of which Paul thus writes to the Philippians :—*and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.* (ii. 8.) Which was a mode of punishment unknown to the Jewish laws, and which even the Roman governor was very unwilling to inflict upon him. However his exaltation immediately followed ; and as, by the pressure upon his human soul ; he had been reduced to a lower state, than any

other human creature ever was, so he is now raised to a higher: *wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.* (9.) So that this same Jesus, who was so savagely insulted in his agony on the cross, hath now all things under his rule.

2. Let us see then, what can our souls derive from this knowledge, for their own establishment? The certainty of future rewards for the righteous; for them who walk, according to the will of God here below. Christ Jesus came into this world, and performed the will of his Father, 'doing always those things, that pleased him:' (John viii. 29.) and the undoubted consequence to himself is, that he hath been received up into glory. As in this corrupt body we can but see, as it were 'through a glass darkly;' (1 Cor. xiii. 12.) the promise of eternal life in glory is not at all times full in our view; and the effect upon our souls is, that they settle towards things earthly: that panting after God, so vehemently expressed by the Psalmist, becomes languid; and the fruits of the spirit suffer a partial decline. (xlii. 1.) In such a season to have our spiritual eyes strengthened; and to view our Redeemer ascending up on high, and entering into his joy, must give fresh assurance, that at the end of the day we shall receive the promised reward; must give fresh assurance, that we shall soon be seated with him upon his throne: (Rev. iii. 21.) and this assurance must create a fresh distaste to the perishable things of earth, and cause us once more to thirst for the waters of life and to say with the Psalmist:—*my soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?*

3. From the consideration of our Lord's having received the reins of government into his own hands, there is also the following most important hope-renewing, and soul-reviving benefit to be derived by those, who are partakers of his spirit. If we look into Paul's epistle to the Colossians, we shall find him telling them; that *Christ is the head of the body the church:*

who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead ; that in all things he might have the preeminence. (i. 18.) If therefore he who ruleth this world ; and who hath the hearts of every creature in the hollow of his hand ; if He is the head of the body the Church, what a blessed state must that church be in ! We most surely know that, as the branches of a tree are essential parts of it ; or as the Sons of Men are all by nature branches from the one root Adam ; so all the individuals, that compose the Church of Christ, are branches from him as the root ; or inseparable members of his body. (John xv. 5.) That they are inseparable is proved by Peter. For when the Lord had once by his powerful word fanned away a multitude of chaff, he turned to the twelve and said ;—*Will ye also go away ?—Lord, to whom shall we go ? thou hast the words of eternal life ;* was Peter's answer. (vi. 67, 68.) Strong as the wind might be, which had driven away such a large heap of chaff ; yet it could not possibly move one pure grain of wheat. (Matt. iii. 12.) Peter felt himself bound to the Lord far faster, than any human chain could bind him : he felt himself bound to him with a chain far beyond any human power to break. This strong cord, which held Peter fast, was the cord of the Spirit of love : as saith the Lord by his prophet Hosea ;—*I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love :* (xi. 4.) to which may be added the strong confirmation from Paul :—*he, that is joined unto the Lord, is one spirit.* (1 Cor. vi. 17.) This then being so, is it not clear what a blessed state the Church is in, being the body of him, who hath all dominion. He cannot do any thing to hurt his own body : that is impossible ; that would be to hurt himself. What a great and decided advantage in this respect have the believers in Christ over them, that do not submit to his rule, chusing still to walk in darkness, 'loving darkness rather light ; because their deeds are evil !'

II. I now pass on to the consideration of the Lord's fulfilment of his promise. 1. On the night before his death, he

promised to send 'the comforter' to his sorrowful disciples ; and after his resurrection he repeated the promise, at the time that he was taking his final leave of them, as to his *personal* presence on earth, saying ?—*behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you : but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.* (Luke xxiv. 49.) When the Lord first made this promise, his disciples were labouring under extreme depression of spirits ; because he had told them, that he must be taken from them : *little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me : and as I said unto the Jews, whither I go ye cannot come ; so now I say to you.* (John xiii. 33.) This was heavy news to them ; and Jesus, on perceiving their sorrow, to prove to them and to the world, that their affliction was his affliction, shortly afterwards added ;—*because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth ; it is expedient for you, that I go away : for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you ; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.* (xvi. 6, 7.) Here is a proof of his unparalleled tenderness of affection at a time, when he himself was feeling the weight of God's wrath for the sins of his people, which were all laid to his charge.

2. Now after his resurrection do we find him altered in his love ? Not in the least : we find him not only repeating his promise of the comforter ; but also giving them many other indubitable proofs of his unchangeable love. It was natural enough, that they should fear, that he was now quite above being concerned with such things, as befel them ; but, said he,—*why are ye troubled ? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts ? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself.* (Luke xxiv. 38, 39.) These affectionate remonstrances evidently shew, that it was equally distressing to him now, to see them troubled, as it was before his death : they shew that his heart still retained the very same feelings. He was truly grateful to them for their attachment to him ;

and he would have them made happy ; he would not have them troubled. I say, that he felt grateful to them for their attachment : most mysterious indeed it is, that even the Creator should so feel towards the creature ; but no less certain than mysterious ; for he in his human nature was reduced in working out man's redemption, to a far greater strait, than any other creature ever was reduced on this earth ; and he was in his distress compelled to offer up *prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him, that was able to save him from death.* (Heb. v. 7.) And do you think he was not grateful to those ; who had the courage to despise all things for his sake ; and to attend him through his arduous struggles ? I well know, that he felt more grateful to them, than any one of us ever yet felt for any kindness, that we have ever received, either from God or man. And we find him thus alluding to their faithful attachment upon a certain occasion, when his disciples in utter amazement had exclaimed—*'Who then can be saved ?'—Verily I say unto you, that YE WHICH HAVE FOLLOWED ME IN THE REGENERATION, when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.* (Matt. xix. 28.) And again in another place he affectionately alludes to it as follows:—*Ye also shall bear witness, BECAUSE YE HAVE BEEN WITH ME FROM THE BEGINNING.* (John xv. 27.) I feel it right to dwell upon this subject, because I well know, that there is no true and steadfast believing in him, without a true and genuine knowledge of him ; not only of his Omnipotence and *'terrible Majesty,' as God ;* but also of his weakness *as an over-burdened, and most heavily oppressed, and most feeling Man.* When he appeared unto them after his resurrection, they found it difficult to believe, that it was *he* : this unbelief was not pleasing to him ; by no means : and he was anxious to cure them of it ; and therefore said unto them ;—*behold my hands, and my feet, that IT IS I MYSELF.* Take notice of these words : *that*

it is I myself. His presence before his death had been most agreeable unto them ; it was that, in which was placed their chief delight ; and seeing them alarmed, he used every means to convince them, that he was the very same man still : that passing through death and lying in the grave had made no alteration whatever either in his person, or in his love : it still is—I MYSELF.

3. Having taken this short view of our Redeemer, from the time of his giving the promise of the Comforter, until his ascension, let us now trace his steps up into glory, where he sitteth on the right hand of God ; and we shall find him the same unchangeable, most gracious friend : *and having received of the Father, the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.* Behold here the fulfilment : behold him now in glory, in possession of ‘the preeminence in all things ;’ and receiving from the inhabitants above—all adoration and all honour : behold him even now remembering his disciples, whom he left in the world below, and paying them the debt, which by promise he owed them. And what are we to gather from this ? why the clearest assurance, that a seat on the throne of glory hath made no alteration in his love. His body is indeed no longer terrestrial : it has received ‘the glory of the celestial ;’ but his soul and all the feelings of it are just the same. It is the practice, with the vain preachers of the day, to say, that he *was* ONCE man ; but the Truth teaches me to say, that he is *now* man : and if he is not, certain it is, that there never will be a man in glory : if he is not *now* man, we have no intercessor there : if he is not *now* man, the head is severed from the body, and the body must of course perish. But through grace ; and through the teaching of the spirit of grace, we have a truer knowledge of our Lord, than to receive a doctrine, which is as much to his dishonour, as it is to our loss. Being sensible of the comfort, which the soul draws from the knowledge of the truth in this respect, I am

the more earnest in insisting upon it; for no *fervent prayer* can possibly be offered up by a sinner below, to a Mediator above, who is not in every respect perfect man: indeed in such case he could be no Mediator. And there can be no life in that soul, which has not this view of him. However without further regarding for the present the false doctrine of vain man, we have contemplated our Lord, though now seated *on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens*; (Heb. viii. 1.) yet remembering his disciples, whom he left below; and fulfilling his promise unto them; by which fulfilment we are taught truly, who and what he is; for it is this Comforter, that, having come, 'leads us into all truth.'

III. The gift itself, with the effects produced, will now occupy our attention: *he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.* What was seen and heard is thus concisely expressed by Luke:—*And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them: and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.* (8, 4.)

1. From this day we must date the commencement of the gospel dispensation; which for the sake of illustration, we shall contrast with the old dispensation of the Law. With such 'terrible Majesty' was the latter administered from Mount Sinai, when *the smoke thereof ascended, as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly*, that the people were exceedingly alarmed, and said unto Moses,—*now therefore why should we die? for this great fire will consume us. If we hear the voice of the Lord our God any more, we shall die.* (Exod. xix. 18. and Deut. v. 85.) From which it is evident that *the Law worketh wrath*: nay more; that it even killeth. (Rom. iv. 15. and vii. 9, 10, 11.) Fire too was the appearance on the day of Pentecost; but in a manner so very different, that there was no fear of being consumed by it, either felt or expressed by those, on whom it sat. On the contrary they felt their hearts cheered, and their understand-

ings enlightened thereby. These different signs and different effects in introducing these two different dispensations are easily accounted for. The Law was a dispensation of terror, because man had offended against it, from the day of his being driven out of Eden: and Paul tells us truly,—that *by the Law is the knowledge of sin.* (Rom. iii. 20.) Whereas, when the much more glorious, though totally unterrifying dispensation of the gospel was introduced, ‘sin had been made an end of;’ (Dan. ix. 24. Heb. ix. 26.) the breach which had been made in the Law was filled up; and the Almighty was perfectly *pacified*; (Ezek. xvi. 63.) our great Redeemer having paid the utmost farthing of its demands: hence ran the tenor of the Angels’ song,—*on earth peace, good-will towards men.* Peace and good-will; because those sins, which had separated between man and his maker, were removed; (Isa. lix. 2. and Col. ii. 14.) and heaven was now opened ‘to all believers:’ and the flaming sword which kept the way of the tree of life, having been thoroughly drenched in the blood of the Almighty Redeemer is, to them, sheathed henceforth for evermore.

Much more glorious, I have observed, is the present dispensation, than the one that has passed away; but the natural man cannot conceive this to be so: because *the veil is upon his heart.* (2 Cor. iii. 15.) The former glory was external; the latter glory is internal. The carnal man under the glory of the law saw a terrible smoke and fire on Mount Sinai: the spiritual man under the gospel is ‘all glorious within;’ and through that light he sees heaven opened, and an inheritance therein reserved for himself. (Ps. xlv. 13, & 2 Cor. iv. 6.) From this partial view of the introduction of the two grand dispensations of God to man, let us turn to the immediate personal effects of this glorious gift upon the Apostles.

2. Fire performeth to man these two great services: it giveth him *light* and *heat*. The spiritual fire of the Holy Ghost performeth the same services in a spiritual sense, that is, it shineth,

and burneth in the soul. This sacred baptism then was first to enlighten the Apostles : to give them a true understanding of the nature of Christ's kingdom : for they together with the rest of mankind had adopted the notion, that the long-looked for Messiah was to be an earthly Sovereign, who should reign for ever in this lower world. A mistaken view of the words of the Lord, which the Prophet Nathan was commanded to speak unto David :—*that I will raise up thy seed after thee, which shall be of thy sons ; and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build me a house, and I will establish his throne for ever.* (1 Chron. xvii. 11.) A mistaken view of this and similar other prophecies had led them into the erroneous notion, that the Messiah, when he came, would for ever continue here, and rule upon this earth : (John xii. 34.) and so deeply rooted was this error in their minds, that when the Lord was put to death, they began to fear, that they had been completely disappointed in believing him to be the promised and expected Messiah. So on their way to Emmaus, we hear two of them thus lamenting :—*but we trusted that it had been he, which should have redeemed Israel.* (Luke xxiv. 21.) Christ had indeed redeemed the true spiritual Israel by that very death, which made them so sad ; and reduced their hopes to so low an ebb : but **THEY TRUSTED**, that it had been he, which should have redeemed typical Israel from the Roman yoke, and subdued the nations, and made them tributary to the Jews. This was their view ; this was their way of understanding that prophecy in the second psalm ;—*I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.* (8.) And this indeed was the only way, in which it was possible for them to understand it without the true teaching of the Eternal Spirit. And although they were enabled to understand many things after the Lord's resurrection, which were hidden from them before ; yet it was not till the day of Pentecost, that they were instructed clearly in the spiritual nature of Christ's king-

dom. For on the very morning of his ascension this question they anxiously asked him ;—*Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?* (Acts i. 6.) But when the light from this sacred fire of the eternal spirit entered into their souls, they soon perceived that ‘the kingdom of heaven cometh not with observation;’ but that it was within them. For this spirit taught them that Christ, by fulfilling the Law and paying the penalty, which they had forfeited by transgressing it, had removed that bar, which stood between them and their MAKER : this spirit taught them, that the Lord by his *doing*, and by his *suffering*, had opened the kingdom of heaven to their souls; that although he was ascended up out of their sight ; yet he had sent down the gift of the Holy Ghost upon them ; and through the means of the spirit, they could still enjoy free communication with him ; the darkness being removed from their understandings.

In an early stage of his ministry, Jesus had said ;—*hereafter ye shall see heaven open* ; (John i. 51.) but they had very little idea, till thus miraculously rebaptized, how this word was to be accomplished : they had very little expectation; that it was to be accomplished by the removal of the Law, and by bringing them into a new covenant; *established*, as Paul says, *upon better promises*. (Heb. viii. 6.) However accomplished, they now found, that it actually was, and thither they could ascend upon the *Son of Man*. ‘When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death,’ says the beautiful hymn, the *Te Deum*, ‘thou didst open the kingdom of heaven to all believers.’ Before he had overcome the sharpness of death, the kingdom of heaven was shut : till then the Old Covenant, the Law continued : and under the Law there is no entrance, there can be no entrance, where God dwelleth ; but on the contrary a complete bar, which man can never break through. The *believers*, to whom the opening is said to be made, are those, who through the influence of the Spirit of Faith, have been released from the yoke of the

Law, and have gained admission into the city of the 'Living God,' clad in her 'beautiful garments.' (Isa. lii. 1.) It is of great importance that we should have clear views of this beautiful hymn, that when we sing, we may *sing with the Spirit, and with the understanding also.* (1 Cor. xiv. 15.) It is of great importance to every soul among us, seeing such a heavy woe is denounced by the lip of truth against the ignorant:—*For that they HATED KNOWLEDGE and did not choose the fear of the LORD: they would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.*

3. It is time for me now to speak of that other effect of the sacred fire, with which the disciples of the Lord were baptized on this day of Pentecost; I mean the heat, or burning effect. Paul tells the Galatians;—*they that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts:* (v. 24.) and this is done by the fire, with which he baptizes them. It is not in any man's own power to crucify the flesh with its affections: however galling such an assertion may be to a fallen, yet self-exalted rebel, creature: that is the work of the Eternal Spirit. Man naturally has no *will* to have his earthly affections consumed, much less has he the *power* to do it. Man's earthly affections are the very essence of his fallen nature; they are what his soul delights in. Therefore this sacred fire, after shewing a sinner, what the following of his own will would lead him to, even to eternal death, in the next place consumes that will, teaching him to pray, saying,—*THY WILL BE DONE.* It goes very hard with earthly man, at the commencement of this work especially, to be thus cut out of his own will; but the blessing of life is the happy consequence. And when the will of the flesh is consumed, then '*the deeds of the body*' languish and wither: because they are rooted in the will, of which they are the branches. These '*deeds of the body,*' mentioned by the Apostle, (Rom. viii. 13.) are the whole of the corrupt law-

principle, root and branch, as it now exists in fallen man. Not only are outward transgressions to be mortified; but the eyes are to be turned altogether from any; and from every deed of the Law; and to be solely fixed on Christ: this is to bear the cross in truth: and this is the only true way of walking in Christ's steps; and of being separated from the world.

But on every fresh temptation, this will of the flesh so contrary to the will of God springeth up again, and must again be consumed by the spirit. It was the feeling of the sharpness of this work, that made Paul cry out,—*who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* (Rom. vii. 24.) The will of the flesh, he here calls *death*: and so it is death: it is the *dead*, the sinful spirit, which we inherit from fallen Adam; and the body or essence of it was grounded in his soul: but he, having received the pure will of the Spirit from above, longs to be delivered from the former one: thus proving that his affections were no longer on the earth; but on things above. (Col. iii. 2.) This is part of the internal happy effects of being baptized with the Redeemer's baptism, the baptism of fire: we shall presently see some also of the external effects.

4. This fire it was, which, sitting upon the Apostles, the assembled multitude beheld: but what they heard amazed them, as well as what they saw:—*We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.* (11.) They very soon began to preach, it appears: this gift had filled their hearts with understanding; and utterance was given unto them to declare the 'the wonderful works of God,' in raising up that despised man, whom the Jews had so malignantly crucified; in working out the redemption of Israel by one, whom they so utterly contemned; and in opening the kingdom of heaven by the carpenter of Nazareth, God over all blessed for ever. They had been commanded to 'tarry in Jerusalem, till they were endued with power from on high;'

and the fire appearing in the shape of *tongues* was a sign, that the power of publishing the way of salvation was now conferred upon them, according to that ancient prophecy : *thy watchmen SHALL LIFT UP THE VOICE : WITH THE VOICE TOGETHER SHALL THEY SING : for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion.* (Isa. lli. 8.) This voice, which Zion's watchmen shall lift up, is the fan spoken of by John the Baptist, the pure crystal stream of truth, which has precisely the same effect upon mankind, as a fan has on the thrashing-floor : it entirely separates the chaff from the wheat. Those, whose souls this divine voice penetrates, cleave close to the fire of truth, which proves in the end a healing medicine unto them, and they are gathered into the Lord's garner. (Matt. iii. 12.) To the rest this same voice is an offence, and they are winnowed away : their vain hope, which never had a foundation is rooted up, and consumed by the fire : and in the final folding up and hurling away of this lower creation, they must be utterly consumed, soul and body, in unquenchable fire. (Mal. iv.)

These are part of the external effects ; these are some of the *solemnities*, which are celebrated in our ever-during city of Zion, 'made without hands : ' and solemn indeed they are ! All foolery, all buffoonery, so constantly practised by the mimicking puppets stuck up in the pulpits around us, are banished far from thence. None but kings and priests can partake of the life-inspiring music, from the golden harps tuned within her sacred walls of fire.

And that these tongues were cloven, was a further sign, that no speech was any longer strange unto them ; that these wonderful works of God in opening the kingdom of heaven ; in *making an end of sins*, by abolishing the old Covenant of the Law, were not to be confined to a corner of the earth ; were not to be barred up by the impediments and difficulties of language : but that the word was now about to be fulfilled, spoken by Isaiah ;—*The Lord hath made bare his holy*

OF THE EARTH SHALL SEE *the salvation of our God.*—(lii. 10.)

When the Lord had the wickedness of man to put a stop to, who was attempting to ascend up unto heaven, by his own powers, and in contrariety to the divine will, it was very easy for him to scatter them abroad by confounding their language ; but when he was graciously pleased of his own accord to open unto man a way into heaven, he can bestow upon him cloven tongues, and gather them together again, and bring them to his holy mountain. (Isa. xxvii. 12. 13.)

It has been said by some, that the Apostles had no true faith, till this gift of the Holy Ghost was bestowed upon them ; but such are deceived ; for they had the true spirit of faith, before Jesus chose them out from among his disciples ; and they were even made preachers by him, before he had finished his work of paying down their ransom ; but then they were only preachers of the kingdom of heaven *to come*. This new gift was to furnish them with *new powers*, making them preachers of a *new dispensation* ; no longer bidding them say,—*the kingdom of heaven is AT HAND* ; but bidding them say,—the kingdom of heaven is *actually* opened to all believers. Amen.

May 25th.—Evening.—Whitsunday.

SERMON VI.

Therefore prophesy and say unto them, thus saith the Lord God; behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.—Ezek. xxxvii. 12.

On the first promulgation of the gospel, the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead appears to have been no small stumbling-block to the Gentiles. When Paul disputed with the Athenians, we find them expressing their surprise as follows:—*He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange Gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.* (Acts xvii. 18.) And in the midst of his Sermon on Areopagus, having made mention of the resurrection of the dead, they immediately interrupted him; some mocking; and others saying, *we will hear thee again of this matter.* So Paul departed from among them. (32, 33.) And it was not only at Athens; but likewise at Corinth and other places, that this doctrine gave offence, causing the self-wise to mock, and to treat with contempt the preachers of that, which seemed to them the

extreme of ignorance. Also at Cæsarea in the presence of king Agrippa and his queen, and a very pompous assembly, we hear the same Apostle thus interrogating his audience :—*why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead ?* (Acts xxvi. 8.)

However, I may be told that this doctrine is generally received in the present day ; that no one doubts of the resurrection in these times. It is received only in part, the essential part is rejected. In the Revelation we are particularly told of the FIRST resurrection ; and that the second death, that is, eternal death, hath no power over them, that have part in the FIRST resurrection. (xx. 6.) It is clear therefore, that the FIRST resurrection is the essential one ; and that there can be no eternal life above hereafter, unless it is begun on this earth below : as it is written ;—*he that hath the Son HATH LIFE, and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life.* (1 John v. 12.) It is this first most necessary, and most essential resurrection, which Jesus and his Apostles every where insist upon in the New Testament ; and which the Prophet Ezekiel insists upon in my text.

To prove and to illustrate the total spiritual death of the people of Israel, the prophet was shewn a valley full of bones, *very dry* ; so dry indeed as to make it appear an impossible thing with man, that they should ever revive : but as the Redeemer hath said, *with God all things are possible* ; so it was proved to Ezekiel on this occasion, that by the preaching of his powerful word, ‘ the bones came together, bone to his bone. The sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above ;’ and at length ‘ the breath came into them, and they lived and stood up upon their feet an exceeding great army.’ All which was done to outward appearance, only by the prophet’s preaching : it is done in reality by the spirit of the LORD : who afterwards tells him, *that these bones are the whole house of Israel ; that is, the whole elect body, or church of Christ, from the beginning to*

the end of time. When **Jehovah** had by this most remarkable vision revealed to the prophet's understanding the way, in which he restores his people to the knowledge of himself, then follow the words of the text : *therefore prophesy and say unto them, thus saith the Lord God ; behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.* There are three subjects here pointed out for me to treat upon.

- I. The opening of the graves of the **Lord's** people.
- II. The causing them to come up out of their graves.
- III. And the bringing them into the land of Israel.

1. Observe then in the first place ; that **Jehovah** saith nothing about opening the graves of all the people of the earth ; but of his own people only. And it must be evident to every one, who reads the Bible with but common attention, that the words thereof are directed exclusively to the people of Israel. *Cry aloud, saith Jehovah to his prophet Isaiah, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew MY PEOPLE their transgression, and THE HOUSE OF JACOB their sins.* (lviii. 1.) The command, you see, is given respecting the house of Jacob ONLY ; and it is MY PEOPLE, that are to be enlightened and fed with understanding. We must therefore make some inquiry concerning this people ; for unless we can prove ourselves to belong to that house, we shall find that the peculiar blessings of heaven can never rest upon us. When God sent forth Abram out of his country, he said unto him ;—*I will make of thee a great nation ; and I will bless thee, and make thy name great ; and thou shalt be a blessing : and I will bless them, that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee : and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.* (Gen. xii. 1, 2, 3.) Thus God chose Abram, and separated him ; and made a covenant with him and with his seed FOR EVER. (xiii. 15.) And when he afterwards brought the children of Abraham out of Egypt by the hand of Moses, he reminded them of the reason why he

chose them ; saying,—*the LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people ; for ye were the fewest of all people : but because the LORD loved you, &c.* (Deut. vii. 7, 8.) It is here asserted, that the love of God was the cause of his choice of this people ; and as they were ever prone to reckon upon their own righteousness, their Maker is very particular in his holy Law in guarding them against such a false notion ; as follows,—*Speak not thou in thine heart, after that the LORD thy God hath cast them out from before thee, saying, FOR MY RIGHTEOUSNESS the LORD hath brought me in to possess this land : but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD doth drive them out from before thee. Not for THY RIGHTEOUSNESS, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land : but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that he may perform the word, which the LORD swore unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Understand therefore, that the LORD thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it FOR THY RIGHTEOUSNESS ; for thou art a stiff-necked people.* (Deut. ix. 4, 5, 6.) It is also further evident from the Scriptures, that there was not any nation in all the earth, which God ever acknowledged to belong to him, except this one only, which he placed in Palestine, or the Holy Land.

When reproving this people by his Prophet Jeremiah, he thus expostulates with them :—*hath a nation changed their Gods, which are yet no Gods ? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit. Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this ; and be horribly afraid ; be ye very desolate, saith the LORD.* (Jer. ii. 11, 12.) The other nations of the earth all remained faithful to their miserable and blind Gods, while the people of Israel had not sense enough to adhere to the LIVING GOD. But this passage I have quoted to shew, that Jehovah the God of Israel did not consider himself as having a claim upon the other nations ; nor did they consider them-

selves as belonging to him. *I am the Lord your God*,—is his constant language all through the Law.

But this people have now long been altogether cast off, I may be told. Most certainly they have: the destruction of their city, their temple, and of their burnt-offerings, are all well known: still those people were typical of, or prefigured, the people of JEHOVAH under the new dispensation, which came by Jesus Christ. Which latter people are as clearly marked, to the eye of the Spirit, and as completely separated from the world, by an inward work of faith, as those former people were distinguished, and separated from all nations by their very peculiar institutions. We learn from Paul to the Romans, that *he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh.* (ii. 28.) When God established his covenant with Abraham, he thus commanded him;—*ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a TOKEN of the covenant betwixt me and you.* (Gen. xvii. 11.) But now when the Apostle comes preaching the new covenant, he informs us in his usual earnest and anxious manner, that no outward mark in the flesh will procure admission for any soul among the people of the Lord: that they must be circumcised is most true; as well as those people of old; but then the circumcision must be inward, performed on the heart. *But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit;* (Rom. ii. 29.) and therefore the instrument with which it is performed must be spiritual; and which instrument is the '*word of faith.*' And when a man is thus circumcised in heart by this sharp and spiritual instrument, he can trace his descent from Abraham, his register having been presented to him by the priest with Urim and Thummim; (Neh. vii. 64, 65.) and not only so, but he finds himself in the possession of the blessing of Abraham, as Paul testifies: *so then they which be of faith ARE BLESSED with faithful Abraham:* (Gal. iii. 9.) and again, *if ye be Christ's, then ARE YE ABRAHAM'S SEED, and heirs according to the promise.* (29.)

2. Well then, having now proved what is signified by the words **O MY PEOPLE**, I proceed to shew you, how they came to be all dead in their graves. They were certainly alive, when God created them in Adam; though not durably so; for in *Adam* **ALL die: by one man, sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so DEATH PASSED UPON ALL MEN.** (1 Cor. xv. 22, & Rom. v. 12.) The Scriptures are very clear and very positive upon this point: and mind, when we appeal to the Scriptures, we do not appeal to the wind: we do not appeal to the words of some vain theoretic philosopher: when we appeal to the Scriptures, we do not appeal to the ordinances of any impious impostor, like Mahomet; nor to the wretched contradictory jargon of the false professors of our age; but we appeal to the truths, which cannot be broken: and these truths declare, that sin entered into the world by Adam, that death came by sin, and in this manner death passed upon all mankind. And this death is particularly evidenced by the hardened heart, and the seared conscience; for when a man hears what the Scriptures declare of him, he pays generally less regard to it, than he does to an idle song; to an earthly tale; or to his earthly employment: he cannot believe, that he is in the dead state, in which the Scriptures declare him to be; but this very want of belief itself proves that he is in that state: the Scriptures declare positively and without reserve,—*the soul that sinneth, it shall die*,—that is, the second death, or eternally. (Ezek. xviii. 4.) Man hears the declaration; he goes home; and forgets it; and says in heart,—‘I shall not die:’—‘I hope to be saved:’ so deeply rooted is the serpent’s original lie in the deceived sinner’s soul. Now how can any man in truth hope to be saved, when he is as dead spiritually, as ‘the very dry bones in the open valley?’ It is a most vain hope. There never was, there never could be, a true and substantial hope in any soul, but that, which has obtained a part in ‘the first resurrection.’ While the sinner remains dead, his hope must be dead too:

and the sinner is surely dead and buried in the grave of an earthly spirit ; a spirit, which is ignorant of Him, who made it ; ignorant even of its own corrupt, fallen, and lost condition ; ignorant from whence it was derived, and to what end it is rapidly advancing. He is buried in the grave of *corruption*, which his earthly spirit is well described to be, having been originally derived by Adam from the Devil in the garden of Eden, from whom hath sprung all unrighteousness. (Job xvii. 14. Gen. vi. 12.)

But this grave the Lord hath said, that he will open : and he not only hath said, that he will open it : but since the Prophet Ezekiel spake, he hath also brought it to pass. Observe therefore in what manner he hath brought it to pass.

3. And here we must inquire, how these graves are closed, in which the people of Israel lie dead. When Joseph of Arimathea buried Jesus, *he rolled a GREAT STONE to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.* (Matt. xxvii. 60.) And likewise when Jesus came to the grave of Lazarus, we are told, *it was a cave ; and a STONE lay upon it.* (John xi. 38.) And in both these cases the stone was rolled away, before the resurrection took place. Just so was there a stone of enormous magnitude, and altogether immovable, by any power short of Almighty power, laid upon the graves of the Lord's people : and that stone is,—THE HOLY LAW. As long as the Law stood in the way between God and man, there was an impassable barrier. And if man had even been awakened in his grave, with that Law remaining on the mouth of it, he never could have come forth : the stone would have been far too heavy for him ever to remove it. Have you ever noticed what is written in the book of Isaiah ? viz., *your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.* (lix. 2.) Before man sinned, he enjoyed with his Maker the most perfect friendship : there was no separation ; no hiding of his face ; no closed ears : but all was love and divine harmony between

them : such as has ever existed between God and the holy Angels. Now the contrary is the truth : *your iniquities have separated between you and your God.*

And the Apostle very justly observes, that *where no law is, there is no transgression :* (Rom. iv. 15.) if we have no command given to obey, we certainly never can be disobedient. But God having given a law, and having annexed the penalty of death, for the breach of it, every transgression must bind that ponderous grave-stone faster to the grave's mouth. Happily however for the Lord's people, that stone, heavy as it is, has, as far as regards them, been rolled away ; and their graves are opened ; and Daniel is found to have prophesied most truly, when he said, that—*seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, TO FINISH THE TRANSGRESSION, AND TO MAKE AN END OF SINS, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in EVERLASTING RIGHTEOUSNESS, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.* (Dan. ix. 24.) Most assuredly there could be no possible way of 'finishing the transgression,' and 'making an end of sins,' but by entirely removing out of the way—the Law, our grave-stone. For it is only, 'where there is no law, that there is no transgression.' Some one may be ready to inquire, —'how could the Law once given, by any possibility ever be removed again ?' That certainly is a very great mystery ; and I can well remember the time, when I feared that it could never be removed from me ; when I felt myself under a broken Covenant, and searched in vain for a way of escape from under it. For it is not until inwardly taught by the Eternal Spirit, that we are made sensible of its removal.

But the 'Most Holy was made flesh, and having taken upon him the form of a servant,' he fulfilled it most strictly in every point, both moral and ceremonial ; and not only so, but he also bore its just vengeance against those, who did not fulfil it : as it is written ;—*for the transgression of MY PEOPLE was he stricken.* (Isa. lili. 8.) And when the justice of

God had glutted its mighty vengeance on this innocent victim, and the Father had expressed himself fully satisfied by returning to his Son, the Son had just time to say,—*IT IS FINISHED : and he bowed his head and gave up the Ghost.* (John xix. 30.) What is finished ? why, the heavy yoke, which he had to bear and more than that,—the transgression is finished : and sins are made an end of : the broken covenant is cancelled ; and a new covenant is sealed ; sealed, not like the old covenant with the blood of goats and calves, but with divine blood : (Heb. ix.) the barrier, the Law is removed : that which separated between God and his people, is taken out of the way : in the words of Daniel ‘reconciliation is made for iniquity.’ Take notice of this word *reconciliation* : it is made use of, when those who had once been friends, have made a settlement of their differences, and have become friends again. So God and Man were once friends ; but, man having sinned, they were separated : now again, writes Paul to the Hebrews, Christ ‘hath appeared to PUT AWAY SIN by the sacrifice of himself :’ (ix. 26.) and thus the reconciliation is made : the everlasting righteousness is brought in : the Most Holy is anointed, and ‘seated upon his throne :’ and the vision and prophecy, viz.—types and shadows, are sealed up ; for the kingdom of heaven being now opened, we behold no longer through the vision and prophecy ; but have open access by the son himself, (Rom. v. 2.) beholding with open face, as Paul says ;—*but we all with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord ;* (2. Cor. iii. 18) that is, from the glory of the old and broken covenant, into the more excellent glory of the new covenant. We may now fairly conclude, that Ezekiel was inspired by the spirit of Truth, when he prophesied, saying ;—*behold, O my people, I will open your graves.*

II. We proceed to the consideration of our second head,—*and cause you to come up out of your graves.* When they had

taken away the stone from the grave of Lazarus, he might notwithstanding have lain in his grave to this very day, had not Jesus *cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.* (John xi. 43.) So with regard to 'the whole house of Israel,' the removing of the stone would be of no avail, unless followed by the life-giving word to bring them up out of their graves. The mere taking away of the stone could of itself never enable the dead to rise. Therefore Jesus said to the Jews:—*verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they, that hear, shall live.* (John v. 25.) When this remarkable voice penetrates into any dead soul, it is sure to quicken that soul; and the first feeling from this quickening is, that it has transgressed all the Law of the Lord; and therefore that it can never stand in the day of Judgment: and that feeling makes it wretched and miserable: for 'the light hath made the darkness manifest;' and proved to it, that it hath no power to keep the spiritual commandments, being of itself carnal: but on the contrary, that by daily offences it is continually adding to its score of debt. A sinner on finding himself in this miserable plight would be right glad to mend his ways; and he even strives with all his might so to do; but that same powerful voice, which first quickened him, keeps working within him: and tears off every vain plaster, with which he labours to heal his wounded conscience, making the wound still deeper. And this divine teaching works a steadfast faith in Jeremiah's words, that it is as impossible for a fallen sinner to heal himself, as it is for 'the Ethiopian to change his skin, or the Leopard his spots.' (xiii. 23.) And thus it is, that like Lazarus he 'comes forth bound hand and foot with grave-clothes.' His carnal feet are bound, that he cannot walk in the commandments of the spiritual law: his hands are bound, so that he cannot untie his feet (or separate himself from the first Adam) to enable himself to walk therein. And yet, according to this figure of the prophet, he

is brought up out of his grave: that earthly spirit, which I told you was the grave, in which he lay buried has received a complete overturning by this quickening voice of the Son of God. Aforetime his mind was wholly engrossed in the things of time and sense; or else wrapped up in his pharisaical prayers and self-righteousness: he had not so much as a serious thought respecting the real and imminent danger of his soul. Whereas now on the other hand, his whole thoughts are from morning till night, and from night till morning—*What must I do to be saved?* (Acts xvi. 30.) The thoughts of salvation were before deferred until a more favourable opportunity; but now salvation is made the first thing with him, and all things are made to give way to that most important of all concerns. The Saviour's words are no longer treated as idle words:—*What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?* (Mark viii. 36.) The reason of this is, because he now believes them. The voice of the Eternal Spirit brings with it an immovable faith; a faith in the divine purity and justice, that no earthly power can shake. Man in nature's state thinks indeed, that he has faith; or at least that he may believe, if he chooses; but such a notion is a complete delusion; a deception of the deceitful heart. (Jer. xvii. 9.) When faith in power really comes, a sinner does not require to be told, that he had been deceived aforetime: he then finds out to his extreme distress, that all his former faith, as well as hope, was a mere empty shadow. But owing to the deceitfulness of our 'desperately wicked heart' it is, that preachers of the truth never could be received by the world, any more than their Redeemer himself was received. We tell the sons of Adam, that there is no power in fallen nature to believe the scriptures; they, imagining that they have a power, do not regard us in the light of friends; but as enemies. At the same time most certain it is, that if man never becomes acquainted experimentally with his loss of the Divine favour, he never will make any

real and earnest application to be restored to that favour. Therefore he, who preaches the truth of the Lord in the plainest manner, is assuredly man's best friend below. However the preacher of the word of God has nothing whatever to do with what man says, thinks, or does; he has only to search out what the will of his Maker and Redeemer is; and to adhere to that, having this consolation that His word ever must and shall prosper in that whereto He sends it: always bringing about, and accomplishing his eternal counsels. (Isa. lv. 11.)

It is further said of Lazarus when he came forth, that he was not only bound hand and foot, but also that 'his face was bound about with a napkin.' Which was to mark out the blind state, in which an awakened sinner feels himself to be. The Saviour's words and acts in performing his miracles were generally spoken and done with the view of illustrating the work of the Eternal Spirit, in bringing man to the knowledge of his redemption. When the blessed Saviour made clay and anointed the blind man's eyes therewith; and bid him, go, wash in the pool of Siloam; (John ix. 6. 7.) do you suppose that he performed such actions without designing to prefigure any thing? On such a supposition they would have been most absurd. God forbid, that we should so charge him. In that last mentioned miracle he most certainly designed to illustrate the washing away of darkness and errors from man's understanding by the pure water of life; the word of his glorious gospel. And also in the case of Lazarus the same thing was still designed, though by a very different figure. When he lay in the grave, he had no sense of any thing: as soon as he had come forth, he was very sensible that he could neither use his hands, nor his feet, nor even see. Just so feels that self-convicted man; whom God hath brought down to cry for mercy: the light of the glory of the Divine Majesty, having shined into his soul, has blinded him, so that he can no longer see any thing of that salvation, that mercy,

that faith, that human wisdom, that self-righteousness, which he had previously trusted in and built his vain hopes upon : they have all vanished out of sight. And it was by reason of the want of this feeling of blindness by the self-wise Pharisees, that Jesus said unto them,—*if ye were BLIND, ye should have no sin* : (John ix. 41.) that is, if ye were *sensible* of the real blindness of your understandings, that would be a proof, that I have caused you to come up out of your graves ; and consequently a proof also, that your sin was, or soon will be, all put away by my *finishing the transgression*. But now ye say, *we see* ; therefore your sin remaineth. By saying,—*we see*, ye prove yourselves entirely dead to all sense of God's justice ; consequently ye are in the state of those, who have never yet been brought up out of their graves : *your sin remaineth*. It is time for me now to turn to the third subject pointed out in my text.

III. *And bring you into the land of Israel.*

1. Our first inquiry here must be,—what, and where is this land of ISRAEL ? We all know where the land of Israel was under the old Covenant ; but where is the land of Israel under the new Testament ? The Israelites, that is, the children of Abraham by faith, have a land of their own now, as well as in former times. When Jacob in his distress had wrestled with God, till he prevailed over him, a new name was given unto him : both as a token that God was well pleased with his perseverance in seeking the blessing ; and also to be descriptive of the noble feat, which he had performed. *And he said, thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel : for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed*. Although the hollow of his thigh was out of joint, he persisted in keeping his hold, and would not let the Angel go without a blessing ; and thus he had power with God ; and through him he had power with men also ; for his request was granted, and the anger of his brother Esau was subdued. (Gen. xxxii.)

All the true spiritual Israelites have power given to imitate their forefather Jacob in this respect : 'in the day of trouble' their souls lay fast hold of '*the MAN Christ Jesus,*' and they keep their hold, till they prevail with him for his blessing : and so they find grace in the sight of their Maker, and dwell under the shadow of his favour. And this is the true land of Israel ; of which the psalmist thus sweetly sings : *He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.* (xci. 1.) It is called a *secret place*, because it can be found by none, but those, 'who are led by the Spirit of God.' (Rom. viii. 14.) If any one should tell me that this, and similar passages of the Bible, relate to the future restoration of the Jews to the land of Canaan in a literal sense, my answer must be, that such a one is miserably deceived. A more absurd notion cannot possibly be entertained. That would be equal to asserting, that Time runs backward instead of going forward. That would be to assert, that the Spiritual temple of Christ, made without hands, shall be destroyed, and the typical temple of Solomon again rebuilt ; of which it is written, that 'with violence shall she be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.' (Rev. xviii. 21.) That the dispersed Jews will receive the gospel at the close of the gentile day, there is indeed some ground for believing ; but the land of Israel, which they will be brought into, is that spiritual land, of which I have just given you a very brief description, where God is worshipped, not with hands ; but 'in spirit and in truth.'

2. But of the manner in which we are brought into this land, after we have been raised up out of our graves, I have yet to speak. Being raised up, bound hand and foot, and blindfolded, we have no power of ourselves to move. Let us then follow Jesus once more to the grave of Lazarus, and listen to the next command, that he gave :—*Loose him, and let him go.* If Lazarus had not been loosed, he might just as well have never been raised. In that bound and blind

condition, of what benefit could life be to him? In such a state he could only be oppressed with the miserable thought, that he must soon perish again. Till the shackles are broken off from the soul of the perishing sinner; that is, till the Spirit of Faith in God's great Mercy in Christ is brought forth within him, he remains in great fear of eternally perishing; and every slight pain, that he feels, makes him tremble, as if the stroke of death was already come upon him. However he was not raised up to be left in that state; for into the land of Israel he shall surely be brought: he is under the gracious care and leading of the Eternal Spirit, who in due time 'looses him, and lets him go,' by 'taking of the things of Jesus and shewing them unto him.' (John xvi. 15.) And as soon as he has seen his Redeemer with the eye of faith, it is then, that he is brought into the land of Israel; where he is nourished by the richness of that holy land, which is truly described in the Scriptures to be 'the glory of all lands.' (Ezek, xx. 6.) Here we become acquainted with our Maker and Redeemer; enter into the enjoyment of 'fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ;' (1 John i. 3.) and upon this acquaintance a real, solid and well grounded hope of glory springs up in our souls. And to imagine to have any such hope before this takes place with us, is only to deceive ourselves to our own eternal ruin, which was also before proved in treating of the first head of this discourse. But now being brought into our own land, and established there, we feel the truth of the words, with which Ezekiel accompanies those of my text:—*And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know, that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord.* (13, 14.) Mark the Prophet's language: *THEN shall ye know:* It is not till then, that any thing is truly known or understood respecting either our Re-

deemer, or the salvation of our own souls: but observe again:—**THEN ye SHALL know**: the darkness is passed away; and the Scripture is fulfilled:—*he that followeth me, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.* (John viii. 12.) Amen.

June 8.—Evening.

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BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

A new translation of the Epistles of Ignatius and Polycarp, with an account of the last sufferings of these two illustrious primitive Martyrs. The appendix to this work contains an answer to the arguments against Christianity adduced by the reckless infidel, Cobbett, in his History of the Reformation: which work beyond all question has been the chief instrument in producing what is called the Catholic Relief Bill. For of late years there has scarcely been an argument used by the Catholic Advocates, from the Duke of Norfolk down to Richard Shiel, which has not been drawn from that work. The reader will also find in this Appendix the principal errors of the Popish idolaters laid open, &c. &c.

THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE: *34 1829.*

A

SERMON,

PREACHED IN THE

PARISH CHURCH OF STOKE NEWINGTON,

ON SUNDAY MORNING, JULY XII. MDCCCXXIX.

UPON OCCASION OF

The Decease

OF THE

REV. GEORGE GASKIN, D.D.

PREBENDARY OF ELY, RECTOR OF STOKE NEWINGTON, &c. &c.

BY THE

REV. AUGUSTUS CLISSOLD, M.A.

CURATE OF STOKE NEWINGTON.

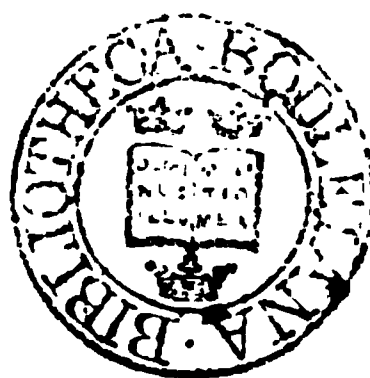
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MDCCCXXIX.



TO
THE MOST REVEREND
WILLIAM HOWLEY, D.D.
LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY,

BY WHOM THE PRIVATE WORTH AND PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE
OF THE SUBJECT OF THIS MEMOIR,

WERE UNIFORMLY HONOURED WITH THE SAME HIGH ESTIMATION
WHICH THE CHURCH IN GENERAL CONCEDED

TO THE
LONG, TRIED, AND FAITHFUL SERVICES OF A DEVOTED,
CONSISTENT, AND DISINTERESTED MINISTER,

THIS DISCOURSE,

BY HIS GRACE'S OBLIGING PERMISSION,

IS INSCRIBED,

WITH SENTIMENTS OF PROFOUND VENERATION.

THE
RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE.

ST. JOHN xi. part of 25th and 26th verses.

I am the resurrection and the life! he that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die.

LAZARUS lay smitten of a mortal affliction. Accordingly his sisters, Martha and Mary, send tidings to Christ of their brother's illness. Our Saviour designs, however, not to restore him; and, in about two days afterwards, Lazarus dies. Our Lord then, in consequence, departs for Judea, but, before he arrives, Lazarus is buried. Martha; therefore, thus gently remonstrates, "Lord! if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died;"—"Thy brother shall rise again," was the answer;—"I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection, at the last day;"—"I am the resurrection and the life," saith the Lord; "he that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die."

In these words are stated the original prin-

ciples of life and death ;—a subject into which we propose to enter ; the more readily, too, because many, even to the present day, who reason upon the immortality of the soul, bring forward the same arguments which were used by mere heathens, and assign to them also the same importance, as if Christianity had never said one word upon the subject—or had left it involved as much in mystery as ever. We shall, therefore, compare the view of immortality which is disclosed to us by the light of nature, with 'the view presented in the words of the text, in order that we may ascertain whether Christianity be or be not any revelation upon the subject, and whether it be entitled to the credit of having definitively settled the question.

Even the mere moral philosopher must grant, that were there any revelation respecting a future state, that revelation would differ from his own view of the subject, not only in point of argument, but also in the very nature of the ideas of which that argument is composed. He might, therefore, justly presume, that even the idea of immortality itself would be different, and, consequently, also the ideas of life and death ; since that could not fairly be deemed a revelation, which left to us only our old conceptions, and merely pointed out new relations between them. Were this indeed all that revelation accomplished, then its truths would be discoverable by natural reason, and as to any new

state of mind resulting from new thoughts, feelings, and affections, most certainly there could be none. Now the words in the text contain the substance of the Christian religion in respect to the doctrine of a future state, involving as they do the three primary ideas of life, death, and immortality. Life, in the words, "I am the resurrection and the life;" death, in the words, "he that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live;" and immortality in the words, "whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die." Immortality, then, being a negation of liability to death, it follows, that whatsoever the term death may signify, the negation of that liability must be implied in some corresponding signification of the term immortality; and death being the privation of life, that whatsoever the term life may signify, the privation of that life must be implied in some corresponding signification of the term death. We proceed then to observe that the three expressions, life, death, and immortality, are used in the text quite out of the limits of their ordinary signification. This is a remark the truth of which, we are sure, will instantly occur to every one. We shall, therefore, in the first place set before you the meaning of these words, as contemplated by the unenlightened moralist; and, secondly, we shall endeavour to explain to you their signification as designed by our Saviour.

By the mere moralist; then, these words are used in the most indefinite and contradictory senses. He has no idea of life, but as natural life; no idea of death, but as natural death; and (we believe) frequently, no other idea of immortality, than as some dark and mysterious revival of natural life. Such would perhaps be the most consistent notion for him to entertain, because he can think of immortality only as a negation of liability to natural death. If you ask him, however, to define his meaning of the term, he will probably tell you that he means an eternal duration of existence. Now here is plainly an inconsistency of thought, for eternal duration of existence is not the same thing with eternal duration of life, any more than life and mere existence are one and the same; yet the terms future life and future existence he uses indiscriminately, as if they had precisely one and the same signification. Should he happen, however, to exclude from his thoughts all idea respecting natural life, his view of immortality will then generally be found to be no other than a mere eternity of abstract existence. Yes! my brethren, existence alone! bare existence!—this is all that the natural man frequently understands by immortality. What darkness beclouds, therefore, his prospects of futurity! What should we be profited, if all that we knew in this world either of ourselves, or of the things around us, were reduced to the idea of blank existence?

Yet this seems to be all to which the conceptions of some men in regard to futurity are reduced. Reason perhaps tells them to advance a few steps farther, and to this idea of existence, to add also that of personal happiness or misery, and when this is completed you are supplied with the substance of their belief respecting futurity. Belief, did we say!—there is very little left for them to believe, and even that which remains is generally selfish in its end, powerless in its influence, and in its relation merely personal. Yes, we repeat, SELFISH in its end! because reduced in its idea of happiness and misery merely to selfish considerations;—POWERLESS in its influence! because containing no truths involving the nature of man's spiritual condition. PERSONAL in its relation! because the idea of God is left out of the question, and the immortality of the soul reasoned upon as a subject perfectly independent of his nature. I say, my brethren, independent of his nature! for there is a way of treating of virtue and vice as mere qualities or relations of thought and action; of heaven and hell, as mere external places of abode; of happiness and misery as mere personal gratification or personal uneasiness, in all which cases scarcely a thought is necessarily introduced of the being or nature of God, or the shadow of a thought respecting Christ as God. Almost could we deem, that the Saviour, beholding how His glory

was denied Him, how Reason, which should have maintained the sovereignty of her Lord, had well nigh plundered Him of every attribute, how Nature had been made to usurp the throne of Jehovah, and to contend with Him for the issues of life and death, that beholding, I say, this rebellion of earth against the Majesty of heaven, He grasped at the power which was being wrested from His hands, that power which was His before time began, which He held not at the voice of mortal, demon, or seraph,—exclaiming with all the thunder of Omnipotence, “ I am the resurrection and the life ; he that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live ; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die.”

Such is the awful view of immortality which is taken in the text ! its nature must be sought out of the personality and nature of Christ as God ; a revelation, therefore, of life and immortality is a revelation of the nature and character of Christ, for thus alone is it that life and immortality are brought to light ; thus, and thus only, do the words of Christ receive their fulfilment, “ Because I live ye shall live also.” How awful and sublime a theme is this !—a theme more suited to eternity than time !

Let us pass from the ideas of the natural man to the ideas of the spiritual ; from the conception of life as a mere object of the senses, to the conception of life as it exists in the Great First Cause.

“Howbeit,” saith the Apostle, “that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural and afterwards that which is spiritual.” St. Paul here speaks in respect to man, and of the order according to which his mode of existence is ordained. In respect, however, to God, that is first which is spiritual, and afterwards that which is natural; for the natural is but a shadow of the spiritual, and in subserviency to all its laws. Spiritual life, therefore, is first in the order of eternity as natural life is first in the order of time, and of these two orders, that which is spiritual is first in rank. Now, “God created man to be immortal, and made him be an image of his own eternity;” He breathed into him therefore the breath of life—not only natural but spiritual life. What then is implied by this spiritual life? Is it “a mere metaphor” as some would have us believe? God forbid!—this is the most important inquiry in the whole compass of the Christian religion, for it is to the vague and indefinite ideas entertained upon this subject that we are to attribute the faded vigour and strength of Christian truth. The laws of the moral or spiritual world are the source, as we have said, of the laws of the natural. Spiritual or moral laws are therefore the only universal laws, upon the same principle as, that Christ, being the truth, is the only universally substantial truth. Even the nature and laws of corporeal life will therefore never be known in their univer-

sal relations without a knowledge of the laws of spiritual life, and these we comprise in this general statement, that, as the body lives when united with the soul, so the soul lives when united with God, as the body dies when separated from the soul, so the soul dies when separated from God, and as the body may live while the soul is dead, so may the soul live when the body is dead. It was, therefore, in relation to this spiritual life that the warning to Adam was originally pronounced, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." This death of Adam was then a spiritual death; a state of privation of spiritual life. What, however, do we mean by this spiritual life? It was a life produced by the union of the soul with God. In what did this union consist? we are supplied with it in these words, "Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness." This shows the relation between God and man. But in what did this image and likeness consist? We believe it to have consisted in the wisdom of the Son and in the love of the Father, inspired into man by the Holy Spirit; that Spirit which proceeds from the Father and the Son, which breathes into the understanding all wisdom divine, and into the will all sacred affections, whose act of inspiration is expressed in those words, wherein it is said that God breathed into man the breath of life. Hence, therefore, it was, that the soul received that spiritual order and confor-

mation, by which it became the “image and likeness of God,” that spiritual conformation and order being necessarily connected with spiritual life—as *form and order in the natural world* are likewise connected with natural life. The privation of spiritual life is the destruction, therefore, of that divine conformation which is expressed in the terms “image and likeness of God.” That divine form and order being lost by Adam, when *for the Godhead of his Maker, he substituted the godhead of himself*, when, for the delight of being wise in his own eyes, he exchanged the sublime enjoyments of heavenly wisdom; when for the love he bare to himself and to the things of the world, he bade adieu to the love of God his Maker; when instead of the spiritual he became the merely natural man, the creature, the slave, and the victim of the senses.

Thus have we endeavoured to explain in part, the meaning of the terms life and death, and so far consequently the meaning of the term immortality. Life implying the union of the soul with God; death a privation of that union, and consequently a privation of life but not of existence; and immortality implying not merely an eternal duration of existence but an eternal duration of life, so that immortality is used rather in reference to state than to duration.

How comes it to pass that although the word immortality is frequently introduced by writers

on what is called natural religion, the terms life and death in their true signification they never venture to apply to the mind? The reason is this: They have no distinct idea of the entireness of its nature, none whatever of its universal relations. They often judge of it only through the medium of their natural consciousness, deeming it, therefore, to be a mere succession of thought. They know nothing of the primeval order in which the soul was created, nothing of that unity and distinctness of existence which it received as the image and likeness of God, nothing of those universal laws of creation by which the heavens and the earth were made, and in terms of which, therefore, the character of the soul is itself expressed.

These, however, are not the only persons in error. There is a way of treating of life, death, and immortality, and of even speaking of these in connexion with the name of Christ, so as to make a most plausible shew of all that is pious in Christianity, all that is goodly and worthy to be received, while the whole of the system will be but very little raised above the merest natural ideas of the most unenlightened natural man. For the death of Adam being used to signify a natural death, the ideas of spiritual life and death are not considered to be embodied in any actual existence, but to be mere vague metaphorical expressions. The sole advantage, therefore, we are made to derive from considering Christ as the re-

resurrection results from this argument, that since he died, and then rose again ; and since it is possible, therefore, for one man to rise from the dead, it may also be equally possible for another ! a view of the resurrection abounding with ideas the most worldly and degrading—consisting of mere outward and visible evidence addressed to the mere servant and slave of the senses.

Christ knowing then, my brethren, that the Spirit of God alone giveth life, whether in the natural or spiritual world, declares in the text the supremacy of the laws of the spiritual over the laws of the natural world. He, therefore, in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, he to whom some thousand years from the fall of Adam had been as one day, goeth forth to the grave of Lazarus, proclaiming abroad that mighty mystery of the kingdom of heaven, that he alone is the source of life, and that nature must stand obedient to his command. “ I am the resurrection and the life ; he that believeth on me, though he were dead yet shall he live, and he that liveth and believeth on me shall never die.”—Did she who wept for her brother understand this mystery of life and death ? Believe, she thought she did, in the power of Christ, before that belief was brought into conflict with the ideas of sense. But when drawing nigh to the grave, she had to encounter the terrible reality presented to the eye, when the grave-stone had to be rolled aside and the swathed mortality

of her brother to be exposed to the gaze and inquisition of day ; confounded and trembling her confidence fails her ;—death must remain his own master she thinks, and corruption proceed with his sepulchral work.—“ Said I not unto thee,” exclaimed Christ, “ that if thou wouldest believe thou shouldest see the glory of God ? ”—“ Father ! I thank thee that thou hast heard me, and I knew that thou hearest me always, but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they might believe that thou hast sent me.”

“ Lazarus, come forth.”

“ Destruction and death hear the fame thereof with their ears ! ” and he that was dead comes forth bound hand and foot.

Tell me no more of sepulchral worms and dust and darkness !—Tell me no more of the vacant, voiceless slumber of the tomb ! The nothingness of the creature is but the basis of the Creator’s power ; his strength but manifests its perfection in our weakness. Why wilt thou sorrow as one without hope ? Alas ! for our brother ! for he dwelleth in the dust ! Lives not God in the dust ?—Alas for our brother, for he hath made his bed with the worm ! Did not God create the worm ?—Yea, the darkness of the tomb hath covered him ! From whom ?—from the presence of God ?—who then is that spirit that can flee from his presence ? Higher than heaven wilt thou climb above him ? Deeper than hell wilt thou descend beneath him ? Broader

than the firmament, wouldst thou ride on the wings of the morning to mete with the measure of thy comprehension the height and the depth, the length and the breadth, of him who is God from everlasting and world without end ?

Deem you the soul can lie earthed in the tomb ? deem you that thoughts can moulder into dust ? or say you not rather, that Lazarus had passed the gates of the grave, and journeyed abroad into some distant fold.—Yes ! to that fold where the souls of the departed were now gathered around him.—But the voice of the Shepherd was heard from afar ; that shepherd who calleth his sheep by their names. “ My sheep hear my voice and they follow me, saith the Lord, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.” So the gates of eternity unclosed at the sound, and through the sepulchre came Lazarus forth, witnessing that Jesus was the Lord his shepherd, that he was the resurrection, that he was the life—yea, of all orders and forms of existence, whether within the veil of eternity or without in the realms of time, whether upon this planetary world, or in those clouds of breathing orbs that scatter their radiance through the bounds of space, that all the angels which excel in strength, where time is swallowed up in eternity and space in unutterable state, might cast their crowns at the feet of Christ, and adore as the image of the invisible

God, Him who is the King eternal, immortal, immutable, before whom the heavens are stretched out as a veil ; who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach, which seraph views not with undazzled sight, for ever reigning by the name Jehovah, that incomprehensible, unutterable, incommunicable name ! the essence, substance, life of all created being, whether visible or invisible, whether in earth or heaven, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers ; for all things were created by him and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things consist ; who is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, the first and the last, who was, and is, and is to come, the Almighty !

How is it that over nature Christ is all-powerful, but that over man he seems all-powerless ? Is it that in spiritual death we are farther advanced than Lazarus was in that which was natural ? Doth not the same Lord which called Lazarus from the tomb call upon you this day to turn from your wickedness and live ? Yea, of a truth he speaketh from heaven ;—he speaketh, indeed, but who regardeth his words ?—Call to the elements he may, and they may give ear to his voice ! Call to the lightnings he may, and they may cry “ Here we are !” Call to the deep he may, and its proud waves may be stayed ! Call to the heavens he may, and legions of angels may speed down from their thrones ! Call to corruption in the grave he

may, and corruption may leap forth into the beauty and day-spring of life! But let him call to the dead in trespasses and sins!—Call louder!—Send forth prophets and wise men and martyrs to call! —“Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light!” will they hear his voice! will they come forth from their grave of slumber! I have called, saith the Lord, but none would answer, I have spoken, they would not hear me! “this people’s heart is waxed gross and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart and should be converted, and I should heal them.”

But how oft have these words been sounded in your ears, by one who no more in this temple can warn you! Unto his servant the Lord hath spoken; and that servant hath answered, “Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth!”—the voice was uttered—not the voice of Christ as on earth, “Lazarus come forth,” but from his throne of glory in heaven! “Come up, hither!” He is not here, he is risen! The Lord hath removed from his earthly sanctuary the lamp he had set to guide your feet into the way of peace! he hath exalted it nearer his throne, there to shine more and more unto the perfect day. As he hath borne the image of the earthy, so now beareth he

the image of the heavenly, for they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever. His was the path of righteousness and peace; let mercy and truth be the guardians of his memory. He was a good and a venerable man—he was truly a patriarch in Israel. As into heaven his works do follow him, so upon earth his works speak for him; throughout all the Church of which he was a servant his name was received as the name of whatever was sincere and zealous in affection, whatever was sound and conscientious in principle. Whether among the high or the low, the living or departed, abroad or at home, he could enumerate among his true friends all who were of estimable character in the Church, all who were distinguished for their excellent attainments.

His * ministry began in the year 1774, and both the energy of his character, and comprehensive views of Christian and clerical obligation, were soon manifested in various ways. In the year 1791 he was an active and leading member of the Committee for carrying into effect the Act for the relief of the Scotch Episcopalians. It may be desirable to call your recollection to the circumstances.

* The following particulars were most kindly furnished by an intimate and particular friend of the deceased Rector.

When the death of the grandson of James the Second had removed the last member of the House of Stuart who could have pretended to the British throne, the Bishops and Episcopal Clergy of Scotland resolved to acknowledge the reigning Sovereign, and to offer up prayers for him in their public service. The Episcopal Church, therefore, of that country felt themselves entitled to a repeal of the severe penal laws which had been passed against them, and a deputation from that venerable remnant of the ancient Scottish establishment came to London to present their memorial to the British Parliament. On that occasion our departed Rector, though at all times with hands full of public and professional duties, was selected as one of the English Committee for obtaining the Bill*, which after much discussion finally passed in 1792, and is now so memorable in the annals of the Episcopal Church of Scotland.

In the year 1795, the Church of England had to deplore the loss of one of her most apostolical ministers, the Rev. Richard Southgate, many years Curate of St. Giles' in the Fields, and sometime Rector of Warsop, Nottinghamshire. His manuscript sermons, which he never intended for publication, were left to the care of his intimate friend, our late Pastor, under whose

* Entitled, "An Act for granting relief to Pastors, Ministers, and Lay Persons of the Episcopal Communion in Scotland."

diligent revision they were soon submitted to the attention of the public. These discourses have arrived at a third edition, and were published as “ the evangelical productions of a most pious and eminent Christian, whose learning was both extensive and accurate, and whose high aim was to promote the glory of God, and the knowledge of Christ crucified for the salvation of penitent sinners.”

In the year 1821, our departed Pastor, (though at the age of three-score years and ten, and though labour and sorrow were striving to bow the energies of his frame) undertook the publication of the Sermons of the American Bishop Dehon, a most amiable, zealous, and eloquent preacher. They were first sent to the press by the Society for the Advancement of Christianity in South Carolina, and a copy was then forwarded to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. Our departed Rector being at this time their secretary, and becoming acquainted with these works but a short period before he gave up his public labours, so highly esteemed them that he felt the obligation of publishing an English edition. From the profits of two editions, consisting of 1000 copies each, between 300*l*. and 400*l*. have been transmitted to the Society in South Carolina; the third edition being now in progress of sale.

But not only in the annals of the Northern

branch of the Church is his name recorded with feelings of the deepest affection and gratitude; it, likewise, extends to the Western world.

At the latter end of 1823, the wants of the infant Church in New York and Ohio were presented in person by the two venerable prelates of those Dioceses; and also, those of Washington College, Connecticut, by the commissioned agent of the Bishop of that Diocese. On that occasion, our departed Rector, acting with two highly revered Noblemen, and two Laymen, his friends, accepted the office of Trustee for collecting funds by which, in the Eastern States, the general Theological Seminary, and Washington College, have both been assisted, and in the States of the West, a College has been erected and endowed, for the education of the sons of the soil in the doctrine and discipline of this the Mother Church. The benefits arising from these Christian exertions, have not only been sensibly felt in the diocese of Ohio, (then the most western spot in which the Church was planted) but the existence of the institution has already led to the first steps in the formation of a diocese still more westerly, extending onwards to the shores of the Pacific, and to be called the “*Mississippi Diocese* *.” By the same means also, an edifice, answering the double purpose of a college-chapel

* This appears by the American Almanack for 1829.

and a church for the newly-formed parish, as well as strictly English in its character, and planned by an eminent English architect, is in progress of structure in the centre of the town of Gambier, and parish of Harcourt. In this blessed work, the exertions of himself and his co-trustees were sanctioned and aided by twenty of the English and nineteen of the Irish prelates, including all the archbishops of the United Church of England and Ireland, as well as by both our learned Universities. Indeed, after such wants had been so notified, it might seem, in the language of the appeal itself, "that if so great and laudable an object should fail for the want of a few of our superfluities, it would be a subject of the deepest sorrow to many persons in both hemispheres, and might seem to indicate a forgetfulness on our part of that especial favour and protection which God has for so many years vouchsafed to our own Church, in order as we believe that it might be a chosen and effectual instrument of diffusing the blessing of the Gospel to other lands *."

* In a letter from Bishop Chase, dated June 11th, 1829, addressed to an English Nobleman, this most cheering account is given of the institution he so happily commenced, in the faith of assistance from the British Isles, which indeed has been abundantly given.

"The building of the College (110 feet of it) is now up, covered and finishing. The walls are massive and exceedingly well put together; they are four feet thick at bottom, receding six inches at every story as you ascend—(four stories in all.)

But what were his labours in the Church as limited to the confines of his own country ?

The weight of the stone forming the cornice is from ten to twenty hundred. The roof, on account of the elevated site of the College, and its consequent exposure to the violent winds of our country, has more timber in it, and is put together with more appropriate firmness, than any thing of the kind in America. The steeple is in good proportion, high and beautiful. The height of the vane from the ground I do not now exactly remember, but it is upwards of 100 feet, (I think 110), and has the most happy effect when seen at a distance, towering over lofty woods. The associations which it creates, both in relation to the past and the future, are such as call forth, in every Christian breast, feelings of the deepest interest and the most fervent gratitude. How lately roamed here the savage and the wild beast ! How lately here nought but the cloud of heathenish ignorance and barbarity hung over the human intellect ! The art of contending with the wild beasts, and of destroying their own species in war, was all that God's intelligent creatures knew or wished for. But now, blessed be His holy name ! a new scene has opened ; the Gospel Sun has risen on us, and now before us stands a monument of its triumphant efficacy. Henceforth peace instead of bloodshed, science instead of ignorance, and the hope of eternal glory instead of the gloom of never-ending despair. Thousands and ten thousands of thousands will reap the blessings, the seeds of which will be sown by this instrument of divine mercy !

“ These, my Lord, are the thoughts which crowd on the mind of every Christian person who duly considers the subject of *Kenyon College*, Gambier, Ohio.”

This letter our departed Rector did not live to see ; but before his death authentic tidings had arrived, not only of the progress of the College and of the Church, but also that the town of Gambier, placed in the centre of a tract of 8000 acres, (wild and uncultivated till the establishment of the College), had be-

For thirty-seven years the entire and laborious management of the affairs of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, was conducted by him as their sole secretary.

For the same period he was Rector of St. Bennet, Gracechurch-street; and till infirmity disqualified him for the office of preaching, his labours were devoted on the Sunday mornings, alternately, to that parish and to our own.

During forty-six years he was Lecturer of the neighbouring parish of Islington *, and in the combined offices of Curate and Rector, he was fifty years the minister of this parish; nay, be it remembered, that from the day of his appointment to the rectory, i. e. for thirty-two years, he was also the *resident* minister.

The labours of our deceased Rector, in any career of more general and extensive usefulness, can, therefore, alone be duly estimated by our bearing in mind what was the weight of his constant and uninterrupted official duty.

come a post town of the United States, and that a second town, named Cornish, and placed at the northern extremity, was daily rising into importance. To record the original source of these extensive benefits, every street, square, and division of the new town bears the name or title of an English benefactor, and among the rest, that of our departed Rector.

* In nearly all the relations to which we have referred, his services were acknowledged by permanent tokens of public respect, which will be handed to his posterity as lasting memorials of the high value at which his labours have been estimated.

Never did he make use of preferment in the Church as the means of accumulating worldly emolument; in that respect his character was literally irreproachable; and to shew, moreover, the sense of Christian humility, gratitude, and contentment with which he received those earthly blessings which Providence in his kindness had bestowed upon him, let us quote his own words, from a letter to a friend. "Few men," says he, "comparatively speaking, arrive at my age, and if the abundance of good things which I have experienced in this life be exchanged for the very lowest seat in another and a better world, I shall have reason to adore and bless Him through whose merits I shall have attained it."

Of his character as a Christian, we may, in general, justly pronounce, that it was marked by a firmness yet simplicity of faith—a steadfastness yet humility of hope—a charity which embraced all mankind, but especially the household of faith; which was unsparing of his means, and unostentatious as unsparing. A friendship once formed with him was, upon his part, sure to be permanent. Those who from their intimacy have maintained to the last their intercourse with him, have remarked that there never was the least diminution in the warmth of his feelings towards any of those objects that had ever been dear to him. He was a loyal subject of his King, a consistent, a faithful, a zealous minister of the

Apostolical Church into which he had been baptized and ordained; and if in this character he might have appeared to some to maintain a too unyielding independence of principle, it was founded upon his own conscientious convictions; that neither from the State, nor from the voice of the people did a minister of Christ receive his commission, but from the Lord alone in heaven. Call to mind those words which (in this very sanctuary he uttered) upon occasion of his becoming Rector of this parish. “My manner of life! would to God it were more pure, more holy, more worthy of your imitation, whereinsoever it is wrong, may God pardon, and His grace correct it; and if in any particulars it be right, may you all be led to follow me, as I follow Christ.”

From the labours of the Church militant, at length he is gone to the glory of the church triumphant. Old and full of years he is gathered unto his fathers. “How is he numbered among the children of heaven, and his lot is among the saints.” “The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, there shall no torment touch them.” They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more!—they shall need not the light of the sun or the moon, for the Lord shall be to them an everlasting light, and their God shall be their glory.

In his own words, used upon an occasion which called forth all his devotional feelings,—“may the praises of that God be uttered, and his name

be glorified, on this spot, as long as the world shall endure, and may we be translated from such exercises in the Church below, to participate in the splendour and perfection of divine worship, praise, and thanksgiving, in the Church triumphant above," and to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost may all honour, majesty, and dominion be ascribed, now and for ever.—Amen !

FINIS.

S *14.1829.*
THE CHRISTIAN'S DUTY

IN THE

12
PRESENT CRISIS:

A SERMON

PREACHED IN THE PARISH CHURCH OF CHELTENHAM,

On SUNDAY MORNING, Feb. 15th, 1829;

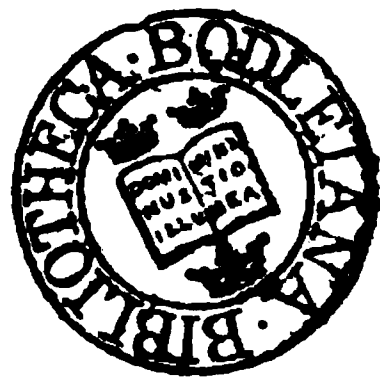
BY THE

REV. F. CLOSE, A.M.

PERPETUAL CURATE.

**HATCHARD AND SON, PICCADILLY, LONDON; WELLER, BETTISON, WILLIAMS,
AND PORTER, CHELTENHAM; AND ALL OTHER BOOKSELLERS.**

1829.



ADVERTISEMENT.

The following Sermon, hastily written in the midst of many avocations, is submitted to the public in the hope that it may tend to allay the undue excitement occasioned by the present state of political affairs ; and with the devout prayer that He who can give efficacy to the weakest instruments, would be pleased to vouchsafe his blessing to this design.

SERMON.

1 TIMOTHY ii. 1, 2.

" I EXHORT, THEREFORE, THAT FIRST OF ALL, SUPPLICATIONS, PRAYERS, INTERCESSIONS, AND GIVING OF THANKS, BE MADE FOR ALL MEN; FOR KINGS, AND FOR ALL THAT ARE IN AUTHORITY; THAT WE MAY LEAD A QUIET AND PEACEABLE LIFE IN ALL GODLINESS AND HONESTY."

It is one of the peculiar excellencies of the religion of Christ, that it teaches its disciples how to conduct themselves under any conceivable circumstances in which they can possibly be placed in the pilgrimage of life. It teaches how to abound and how to suffer need: to be humble in prosperity and patient in adversity; it imparts to the soul of the believer that equanimity, calmness, and resignation, which all the philosophic schools of the ancients failed to secure to their followers in times of trouble and excitement: and whether he be afflicted from without or from within; whether his fears and his hopes are called into action by private or public affairs, the believer has an anchor to his soul sure and steadfast; he knows that the Lord reigneth, that the wrath of the wicked only worketh His will, and that the remainder of it he will restrain. The feelings of the Psalmist, as recorded in 46th Psalm, express the confidence of every faithful Christian in seasons of national and political excitement; "God is our refuge and

strength, a very present help in trouble: therefore will we not fear though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof." He beholds Christ's spiritual church, the only true church, numbering among its numbers **ALL TRUE BELIEVERS OF EVERY DENOMINATION, ALL WHO LOVE THE LORD JESUS CHRIST** in sincerity, and walk according to godliness; he beholds it and exclaims, v. 5. "God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her and that right early. The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted. The Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge!" and then he listens to the delightful exhortation, "Be still and know that I am God, I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth."

The holy confidence of the Psalmist, his devout reliance upon the God of promise and faithfulness in seasons of difficulty and alarm, well accord with the practical exhortations of the apostle, exhortations always needful, but more particularly so in such seasons as the present. And while there are some even of professing Christians, who do not like to be reminded of their duties, and who esteem all practical exhortations unnecessary and legal, I humbly conceive that the ministers of God, the watchmen of the church, are bound in

turbulent times, to remind Christians of their duties as citizens of the world, as members of the community, as men and as subjects; not by espousing any political party to make the pulpit an arena of carnal disputation, or an engine of state intrigue; not to increase the fever of excitement, but to allay it; not to give an additional edge to the rancour of conflicting opinions, but to pour oil upon the troubled waters of life, and to enforce with meekness, wisdom, and love, the more quiet, unostentatious, and spiritual duties of the pious believer in stirring times. I pray God that what may be advanced to day may be for His glory, for the comfort and edification of His people, for the furtherance of truth, and for the allaying of the turbulent passions of mankind.

What then is the primary duty which St. Paul enforces in his apostolic charge to his son Timothy? What is the direction of him who had suffered the loss of all things by persecution, who had jeopardized his life continually among the bitterest enemies of the gospel, and who was living under the tyrannical sway of the most blood thirsty of the Roman emperors? "I EXHORT, THEREFORE, THAT FIRST OF ALL, SUPPLICATIONS, PRAYERS, INTERCESSIONS, AND GIVING OF THANKS, BE MADE FOR ALL MEN." Now, I fear that that duty which the apostle here inculcates, "AS FIRST OF ALL," is the last of all which many discharge, many who are most active in the defence of

the religion established in this country. Amidst the din of the present political outcry, who has heard the still small voice of prayer? What admonition has been given, entreating all who fear God to carry the cause of His gospel to the throne of grace, and to defend His spiritual church from all the attacks of his enemies? I doubt not that some holy hands have been lifted up in secret to Him who alone can calm the tempest, and say to the stormy passions of men peace be still. But can we hope this of many who imagine themselves to be the most staunch champions of orthodoxy, and the boldest defenders of the faith? We judge no man; but let all beware of wielding carnal weapons in defence of a spiritual cause; let us guard our minds and watch over our spirits, and be anxious to commend the cause which we may believe to be the cause of God, to Him who alone can give success, in earnest prayer, rather than by vehemence, uncharitableness, and political animosity, to disgrace the matter which we have in hand.

And observe for whom we are to pray—not for our own little circle alone, not for one particular church, or denomination of Christians—nor for this form of religion or for that—but **FOR ALL MEN!** Yes, for all men. I pity the narrow minded and crude religionist that cannot pray for all men, and preach the gospel to all men—and supplicate every temporal and spiritual blessing

for every human being! What have the secret decrees of God, made unknown to us, what have they to do with our conduct? It is the will of God that his mercy be offered to every creature, to every sinner—freely, without money and without price—for it is said of Him in verse 4, “that He will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth”—“He willeth not the death of the sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live;”—and though He has known and chosen His people from all eternity, it is not His decree that causeth any sinner to perish, but that sinner’s own perverse heart and corrupt affections. Wherefore we have all joined in the scriptural petition of our Litany this day, “That it would please Thee to have mercy upon all men.”

But while this general supplication includes all, we may well enquire whether in our own minds we intended to include all: not our friends merely but our enemies; not those only who agree with us, but them also who differ from us. And when the apostle bids us offer these fervent supplications and prayers for all, he means for all men individually; for the miserable, the afflicted, and persecuted; for the prisoner and captive; for the ungodly and profane; for all those who are deluded by superstition and error; by ignorance and spiritual darkness. Here then again is a subject of enquiry. Do we pray continually and earnestly for them whose

religious opinions we believe to be of so dangerous a character as to tend to the overthrow of church and state? While we denounce their errors and expose the unscriptural tenets which they hold, do we remember the poor deluded ones themselves at the throne of grace, and pray that God would take the veil from their hearts, enable them to see and understand the truths of his word which they profess to believe, and so bring them into the way of peace?

But the apostle proceeds further in my text to point out the duty of prayers and supplications for particular persons whom he names: "for kings and for all that are in authority," or as it is in the margin, "all that are in eminent place." How urgent this duty, my brethren, in the present crisis in the history of our land! and may I not add, how lamentably is this duty neglected! Before we pass judgment upon the wisdom or the motives which guide those that are in power let us ask ourselves, did we constantly pray for our rulers, that they might be rightly directed, and divinely guided? did you ever seek heavenly wisdom for them? You profess to do this in public prayer, but I fear that the wise and scriptural prayers of our church are seldom followed up by secret petitions of a like nature. It is now considered by some to be enthusiastic to pray to God, and to refer to his providential guidance of the affairs of men. Many express themselves as if we achieved our victories without the help of God; they

rest our national prosperity on the wealth and talent of the people ; upon the strength of our armies and navies ; upon human agency alone ! But if we do not give thanks to God for our present unrivalled situation among the nations of the earth, God may deal with us as we deserve ; provoked by our practical denial of his power and goodness, He may divide and confound our senators ; suffer infidelity, scepticism, and socinianism, to revive ; dangers far more imminent than any which need be apprehended from the cumbrous machinery of popery ; and he may withdraw the light of his truth from our once highly favoured land, and consign us to darkness and despair.

What then is the believer's duty in these fearful times, when all the conflicting principles of moral and spiritual desolation seem about to be let loose upon us ? what but to carry his petitions to the throne of the King of kings and Lord of lords ? And how can he express himself better than in the words of our Liturgy : and first of all for our most gracious sovereign—how apposite and beautiful the prayers of our church ; “ Almighty God, we are taught by thy holy word that the hearts of kings are in thy rule and governance, and that thou dost dispose and turn them as it seemeth best to thy godly wisdom ; we humbly beseech thee so to dispose and govern the heart of George thy servant our king and governor, that in all his thoughts, words, and works, he may ever seek thy honour and

glory, and study to preserve the people committed to his charge in wealth, peace, and godliness; replenish him with the grace of thy Holy Spirit, that he may alway incline to thy will and walk in thy way. Endue him plenteously with heavenly gifts: keep and strengthen him in the true worshipping of thee, in righteousness and holiness of life; rule his heart in thy faith, fear, and love, that he may evermore have affiance in thee, ever seek thy honour and glory; and finally after this life attain everlasting joy and felicity through Jesus Christ our Lord."—Greater blessings than these cannot be sought at a Throne of Grace by a devout people for a beloved sovereign.

But as in our free constitution laws must emanate from the three estates of the realm, so must we pray, and so we are taught by the example of our church to pray not only for the King, but for the King, Lords, and Commons—for the great council of the nation now assembled in Parliament—assembled, doubtless all must be agreed, to decide questions which in their direct or collateral tendencies, may deeply affect the spiritual condition of our native country and her vast empire in Europe and Asia. Now while a mighty strife is maintained within and without the doors of that house—while the ablest of men differ in their mode of defending religion, yea, while many pious persons confessedly avow their difficulties and differences, what can we do, my beloved brethren, so well calculated to

bring the matter to a successful issue as to join in the devout supplication of the church which she offers for the high court of Parliament, “that God would be pleased to direct and prosper all their consultations to the advancement of His glory, the good of His church, the safety, honour, and welfare of our sovereign and his dominions ; that peace and happiness, truth and justice, religion and piety, may be established among us for all generations.” I should have more confidence in a few earnest petitions such as these, ascending from the devout hearts of the people of God, than in all the wisest political measures adopted without them. They who love the Church of England because she is a spiritual church, and a branch of Christ’s universal church, and because her written liturgies, articles and homilies, breathe the spirit of God’s own word; they will diligently use the weapons which God has given them in her defence; “weapons which are not carnal, but mighty, through God to the pulling down of strong holds,” viz. THE WORD OF GOD AND PRAYER—these are the sling and the stone that every spiritual descendant from David will be skilful to use. The bible is circulated among our poor, their children are instructed to read it ; all classes hear the gospel preached : these are our means of defence, having used them we will betake ourselves to prayer ; we will spread our hopes and our fears before the Lord as Hezekiah did, and then we will be confident because we know “that

the Lord of Hosts is with us, and that the God of Jacob is our refuge."

But we must observe, once more, the object of the apostle's prayers for kings and for them that are in authority ; (verse 4,) viz. "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty"—that is, that we may enjoy the protection of government and be permitted to serve our God according to our conscience, without hindrance or persecution; and that we ourselves may in return be quiet and obedient subjects, careful above all other things to lead a godly and Christian life, to walk humbly and holily in the sight of God and man. With respect to the former petition we may (as the apostle bids us) add our thanksgivings to our supplications for that measure of spiritual liberty which all the subjects of these realms have long possessed. In no nation of Europe have the whole people so much SPIRITUAL freedom and toleration as we enjoy: let us praise God in this behalf, and pray that these blessings may be continued to our children's children in all generations. Spiritual freedom was not always enjoyed in this country—we may be deprived of it again; let us then continually supplicate a throne of grace that our spiritual liberty may never be encroached upon, and that the time may never again return when the terrors of the civil power enforced uniformity of faith and religious worship at the peril of the stake or the sword.

But I am anxious rather to inculcate the corresponding duty of a Christian subject, which he owes to a tolerant government; viz. himself to lead a quiet and “peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.” “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.” We do not read of the early Christians mixing much with the temporal concerns and political strifes of the world. Let each pious man among you endeavour to allay the irritation of party feeling, to soften political and religious animosities—to contend earnestly for the truth, but in the meekness of wisdom, and in a spirit of love and gentleness and good will to all men. Personal religion, individual and private godliness, is after all the great defence of any state. Every bad and ungodly man is and must be a bad, because a demoralizing subject; “for righteousness exalteth a nation, and sin is the reproach of any people.” Let us then contract our speculations to the narrow sphere of our own hearts—let us see whether we are each one of us upholding true religion by our own examples in our families, and in the social circle. Are we educating our children in the faith and fear and love of God, and teaching them subjection to human authorities for conscience sake? Are we men of prayer? Do we pray with our families, and for all men—and for all orders of society? I fear the reason why we are so negligent in those relative duties, is because we know so little of

the value of prayer to our own souls. He will rarely pray for others who does not pray for himself. He will disregard the hand of God in Providence, with respect to the great concerns of national welfare, who does not discern it in the little history of his own heart, or in the events of his own life. Men may indeed be peaceable subjects, and discharge the moral and social duties of society with great diligence and propriety without the fear and love of God in their hearts; but they will seldom be found in earnest prayer for their king, their country, and their religion, who do not constantly and earnestly seek spiritual blessings through the same channel for their own souls, and for the souls of all who are dear to them.

Look into your own hearts to solve this question. Are you diligent in private prayer? not in the mere bowing of the knee and moving of the lips, not in the mere formal repetition of certain words however good and sound, but does your heart desire, and do you earnestly plead with God, for Christ's sake, to give you an interest in his great salvation; to make you a member of his spiritual kingdom, to make you not only peaceable but godly? To live without constant, earnest, private prayer, is to live without God in the world—and all who so live are in imminent peril of losing their immortal souls. If it be so with any of you may the Holy Spirit awaken you to a sense of your danger, and lead you to seek salvation in such earnest

supplications, that it may be recorded in heaven of you, "behold he prayeth."

And to those of you who understand the nature and feel the value of prayer, who enjoy communion with God and derive from prayer all your spiritual blessings, consolation, guidance, and support in earthly difficulties; to you I would say, remember the cause of true religion when you are in the presence of God. Do not venture to pray for the adoption of any particular measures, or the success of any particular plans which you may think best to promote religion in the world, or to defend the country from error and superstition; but pray earnestly that the God of all the families of the earth may so rule and govern the hearts of them who are set over us, may so guide the counsels of our senators, and allay the passions of men, that we may not only continue to enjoy ourselves the unspeakable blessings of spiritual light and life, but that all the events of our times may tend to the glory of God and the general diffusion of heavenly knowledge. "That God's ways may be known upon earth and his saving health among all nations;" and that we as a people may still be permitted to bear the light of revelation in the world and to be the instruments of conveying the knowledge of the truth to the remotest corners of those vast regions of idolatry and sin over which the Almighty has given us temporary dominion.

And finally, my brethren, let not the sneer of practical infidelity, or the scornful con-

tempt of the proud shake your faith in this truth **THAT GOD WILL HEAR SUCH PRAYERS.** “The effectual fervent prayer of one righteous man availeth much;” and if all who love the Lord Jesus Christ, (and I believe and trust that their number is not few among us,) would unite “in supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks for all men;” but especially at this crisis, “for kings and for all in authority”—I believe, that as all the ship’s company who sailed with Paul the prisoner, even two hundred and seventy six souls were saved from a watery grave for the apostle’s sake, and as ten righteous in the city would have saved Sodom and Gomorrah from destruction, so this land shall be saved from all her spiritual enemies, for their sakes whom man despiseth, for the sake of them who are not of this world, who live to God amidst surrounding carelessness, ungodliness, and dissipation, and whose prayers and whose cries shall come up for a memorial before God; and he will say of our sinful nation, our ungrateful land, a land so insensible to all the rich mercies conferred upon it; he will say of it, “**DESTROY IT NOT FOR A BLESSING IS IN IT.**” May we be found among the partakers of that blessing, and so live and walk in the sight of God and man, that we may at last be counted worthy of a better inheritance, and be owned as the children of a better country!

THE DUTY AND ADVANTAGE OF CULTIVATING THE
UNDERSTANDING.

Sh. 1629.

A SERMON

PREACHED AT THE CHURCH OF GREAT
MUSGRAVE,

IN THE COUNTY OF WESTMORLAND,

June 14, 1829.

TO WHICH IS ANNEXED

A short Memoir

OF

DR. SEPTIMUS COLLINSON,

*Late Provost of Queen's College, Oxford, Margaret Professor of Divinity,
in the same University, and Prebendary of Worcester,*

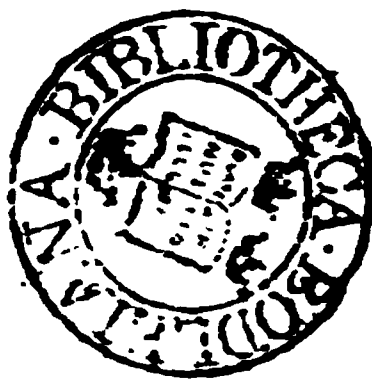
BY THE

REV. JOHN COLLINSON,

PERPETUAL CURATE OF LAMESLEY, IN THE COUNTY
OF DURHAM.

NEWCASTLE: PRINTED BY J. & R. AKENHEAD, SANDHILL.

1829.



TO
**THE RECTOR, CHURCHWARDENS, AND
INHABITANTS**

**OF THE
PARISH OF GREAT MUSGRAVE,
IN THE COUNTY OF WESTMORLAND,**

THIS

Memoir and Sermon

ARE RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED BY

THE AUTHOR.

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SEPTIMUS COLLINSON was born at Gotree, near Huntsonby, in the County of Cumberland, September 11, 1739. He was the youngest of seven sons, the children of Joseph and Agnes Collinson, who, soon after his birth, removed to a small estate which they had purchased in Great Musgrave, in the County of Westmorland. Here he was brought up, and evinced throughout his life an attachment to this Parish, and its neighbourhood, similar to that which a man generally feels for his native place. He began his studies at Appleby Grammar School, and repaired from thence to Oxford, where he was received upon the old foundation of Queen's College. While at Oxford, he pursued his studies with singular credit, and passed through the various gradations of rank in his own College, 'till he reached the highest, and became Provost. He was Public Tutor for a great number of years, and it has been often remarked that no Tutor was ever more beloved and respected than he was by his Pupils. He took the degree of Master of Arts in 1767, and Doctor in Divinity in 1793.

In the year 1794, he retired from the University, and accepted the College Living of Holwell, in the County of Dorsetshire, where he only remained about two years, for in 1796, Dr. Thomas Fothergill, the Provost of Queen's College, died, and he was immediately elected to fill that dignified and honorable station. Soon after his elevation to the headship of Queen's College, the University conferred upon him one of its highest honors. He was, in the year 1798, chosen Margaret Professor of Divinity, to which is annexed a Prebend of Worcester Cathedral. In addition to the situations given to him by the University of Oxford, and Queen's College, he held for a great number of years, and 'till the time of his death, the Living of West Dowlish, in Somersetshire.

After a life spent in useful exertion, in acts of Christian benevolence, and unchallenged integrity, he died at Queen's College, January 24, 1827, aged 87 years, and was buried in the Provost's vault.

He divided the great bulk of his fortune, which he had honorably earned, amongst his relations; but feeling to the last an attachment to the place where he had spent his childhood, he added the following clause to his will.

“ I give and bequeath to my Executors hereinafter named, the sum of fifteen hundred pounds stock in the three per centum consolidated annuities, in trust, that the produce or interest of the said stock be applied to the foundation and support of a School, on the Madras System of education, in the Parish of Great Musgrave,

in the County of Westmorland; and I leave entirely to my said executors, the time and manner of conducting and settling this business, as they shall judge most convenient and advantageous to the Institution. And I appoint my said nephews John Collinson, son of my late brother John Collinson; and John Collinson, son of my late brother Richard Collinson, joint Executors of this my last Will and Testament.”

Pursuant to the scheme suggested in the foregoing quotation, and by virtue of the authority given to them, his executors have taken measures to place the whole management of the charity in the hands of a Visitor and four Trustees; but previous to this final arrangement they have, with the assistance of £50 from the National School Society, in London, and some donations from the Parishioners, and other friends to the Institution, caused new School rooms and a dwelling house to be built, with permission of the Lord of the Manor, upon Musgrave Common, where all children residing in the Parish may be instructed free of expense.

It was upon the election of the first School-Master, and the settlement of the Rules for the management of the School, that the following Discourse was delivered in the Parish Church of Great Musgrave.

SERMON, &c.

VI. CHAP. GAL. PART OF 7 VERSE.

Whatsoever a Man soweth, that shall he also reap.

THE cultivation of the mind has often been compared to the cultivation of the soil, and there is much propriety in the comparison. We see the husbandman commence by eradicating from his field every injurious thing that may oppose itself to the final success of his labors; and after having fitly prepared it, he sows the seed, which, with GOD'S blessing, he expects will yield him, in due season, a rich harvest. Just so must the human mind be treated. A wise teacher will begin by eradicating every evil propensity, and correcting every evil habit; and when the pupil is brought into a humble and docile state, he will introduce the elements of such knowledge as he wishes to take root, and flourish, and bear fruit. But there are various soils, and various crops; and no soil will remain totally unproductive: if it be not charged with wholesome grain or herbage, it will most probably nourish and mature a crop of noxious and disgusting weeds, whose seed will be scattered by the winds, to the great injury of the surrounding fields: and this is a picture of the neglected youth, who having had no virtuous principles implanted in his mind, displays the features, and scatters the contamination of vice. But more than this, the soil that has been cultivated, may have been

managed injudiciously, for all are not like the wise husbandman. Folly may have sown corrupt seed, and wickedness may have mixed tares with the wheat. And to such we may compare those who instil into the minds of youth vain imaginations, and prideful feelings, and loose principles. In both the cases I have instanced, "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

It is, I presume, unnecessary to remark that I have been called upon to address you to-day in consequence of the establishment of a free School in your Parish, endowed by one, who, when a youth, found his amusement in sporting upon the very spot where the building is erected, and his education at a most respectable grammar school in the neighbouring town; who well knew the necessity of cultivating the human mind, and who himself, enjoyed, in a very eminent degree, the advantages of early and virtuous instruction. From this neighbourhood he repaired to the University of Oxford, where he spent the greatest part of his life. Heaven blessed the good man in all his pursuits, and thus gave us a lesson to do well, and calculate upon the favor of Him, whose eye continually rests upon us all, and notes the most trivial, as well as the most important actions of our lives.

And was he an ungrateful Recipient of Heaven's blessings? Let the numberless but unostentatious deeds of charity which he performed, answer. Let those whom he found in want, and left in comfort, answer. Let this Parish with its well endowed free School, answer. In this very Church there is a tablet which records his filial duty and affection; and upon your sacramental table may be seen proofs of his veneration for the ordinances of Religion.

The School which has just been established in your Parish will be a perpetual monument of its Founder's

benevolence, from which generations unborn may have to bless his memory. It stands, and with the blessing of Heaven will flourish like a wide spreading tree, converting the barren waste into a fruitful garden : a tree under the shadow of whose branches your children, and your children's children may repose in comfort, and from whence they may gather that food which will nourish their souls to eternal life : and I am sure it is unnecessary for me to exhort you to cherish it with affection, and guard it with vigilance.*

There has been much said of the expediency, nay of the propriety of making education so general as it has become in modern days. Almost all the wisdom, and the virtue of the age have been called into the discussion, and the favorers of education have obtained a marked triumph. A system borrowed from the East, and brought hither by Dr. Bell has greatly facilitated the great and arduous work ; for by its means one teacher may now accomplish what would formerly, according to the old plan, have required the efforts of five, or, perhaps of fifty. This system, since its first introduction, has been improved and matured, not only by Dr. Bell himself, but by other teachers, who, receiving their first illumination from him, and still adhering to his general principles, have ventured upon little alterations, in order to adapt it to the peculiar nature and circumstances of the town or district where they live. The Founder of your School has ordered that it shall

* Perhaps the most effectual way to cherish and support the School is by enforcing a strict attendance, as well as conformity to all the rules. If Parents do not lend their aid to the Master in the management of the children, he will find his difficulties almost insurmountable ; and he will not be able to do justice either to the children themselves, to his own character, or to the character of the School. Both Parents and Children are to consider that they receive the benefits of the Institution upon certain conditions, which conditions are expressed in the rules, and those who perseveringly violate them must not be surprised if the Trustees inform them that they have forfeited their privilege.

be conducted on the Madras System, and as far as the number and wants of your children allow, or admit of its possibility, his wishes will be attended to; at the same time it must be obvious to all, that a plan adapted to the management of a thousand children, divided and subdivided into numerous classes, cannot, in all its details, be followed in a thinly inhabited, and retired parish like yours, where, from the difference of sex and age and pursuit, almost every child will require to be individually attended to, your numbers being too few to admit of their being classed with much effect. Your Founder was however well acquainted with these circumstances, and all he could possibly have meant, is, what I have already said, that the Madras System should be followed as closely as the nature of your Parish would admit of; and this the Trustees will feel it their duty to urge upon the Master.

In regard to the religious education of the children, it will be founded upon the principles and faith of the protestant establishment of this Country; and a regular attendance at Church will be enforced upon all those who receive the benefit of the Charity. In an age like the present, when heterodoxy and infidelity are making such violent attacks upon our Church: when, if there be a persecuted race, in these days of boasted liberality and toleration, it is the race of Church Ministers, whose rights are disputed, whose characters are calumniated, and whose persons even are often insulted: in such an age, it well becomes all the friends of the establishment to introduce sound principles into the hearts of their children: to guard well all the avenues to the infant mind, that no error may steal in unobserved: to place strong barriers round the field that is under cultivation, lest the enemy come in the night, and sow tares amongst the wheat; for be assured "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he

also reap." And while we teach our Children Christianity, as it is explained in our Church, let us show them its fruits in our lives: let them see that we can bear persecution with patience, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ; and that we can not only forbear to retort in anger, but even love and pray for our enemies, as He has commanded us.

If this spirit prevail in our conduct, we need fear nothing for our Church's safety: although every day should bring forward some new antagonist, and every hour some new witticism or slander to bring it into contempt, it will stand firm like the rock or the mountain which bids defiance to the storms that howl around it; for GOD will protect the meek, who are called His children; and they, who, when they are reviled, revile not again, will find a friend in His Son Jesus Christ, their great Exemplar. We wish not to domineer over others, and we judge no man on account of his religious principles. In this world of darkness and error, it would be the highest presumption in any one to boast of infallibility: but while such boast we modestly disclaim, we feel anxious to train up our Children in the way *we think* they should go: to lead them through the path *we think* will conduct them to Heaven: to sow in their minds such seed, as *we think* will produce a full and wholesome harvest: and it is only under the influence of such feelings as these, that the Trustees of your School will strictly enforce such a course of religious instruction and discipline, as accords with the doctrines of the Church of England.

Allow me now to draw your attention more closely than I have hitherto done to the words of our text, where the Apostle teaches us under a metaphor, the well known christian doctrine, that every man shall be rewarded according to his deeds: that if we do well, we shall obtain

Heaven's blessing; but if otherwise, we may expect to receive punishment, "for he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting." Saint Paul was here admonishing the Galatians to a kind and benevolent conduct towards their spiritual instructors, and says, "let him that is taught in the word, communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

I presume I am fully justified in applying these words to the particular circumstances which have placed me before you to-day; and I shall attempt to advance some arguments to show the value of the Institution that we have at last, by mutual efforts, completed; where your children are to receive not only such instruction, as will enable them, with GOD'S assistance, to fulfil the duties of life, but especially such as will teach them how to prepare for death. I trust you will perceive that, in the succour and protection of an Institution established for such purposes, you have a duty to fulfil as urgent and holy as that which Saint Paul proposed to the Galatians: and allow me to add in the words of the same Apostle, "Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

At our first entrance into life, the objects we behold are almost all flattering and deceitful: which ever way we turn, we imagine we see pleasure offering something for our enjoyment; and we greedily snatch at the tempting bait. Untaught by experience, unsubdued by disappointment, the boy imagines every thing really to be what it seems; and thus he falls into a thousand errors; for things are constantly found to be very different from what they appear to be. I appeal to those who have

passed the state of boyhood: to those who have had some experience of life's changes, temptations, and disappointments. Have you not often pursued with avidity some imaginary good, which, when obtained, has proved to be either totally unsatisfactory, or wofully mischievous? And have you not then said, happy would it have been for me, if some one had taught me to distrust appearances: had implanted in my mind the principles of prudence and self denial: had pointed out to me those objects which were truly good, which, when obtained, would have rewarded me for the pursuit; and not have tempted only to betray, like the vain and mischievous things I have so foolishly sought after! This is what I am endeavouring to show. You have had experience: you are acquainted with the world's deceitfulness, and the credulity of childhood: you know the value of instruction: some of you have felt its want, others have enjoyed its advantage; and you are now called upon to protect and encourage an Institution calculated to save the children of your neighbourhood from the evils of ignorance, and to bestow upon them the benefits of knowledge. They now view objects through the same false medium that we did, when we were young; and if we would know what are *their* errors, we have only to recall our own. As *we* were once deceived by the world's blandishments, and terrified by the world's frowns, so, in the same manner are they now. As *we* were once captivated by sin, because it borrowed the garb and smiles of innocence: as *we* once played with the serpent, and knew not that it concealed a painful sting, 'till we felt the subtle poison in our veins, so are they doing now. As *we* once shunned, and almost hated religion, because its worst enemies had hid its loveliness under a mask of gloom and austerity, so are they inclined to do now. Then let us step forward to dispel the mist in which they

are enveloped: to expose the errors by which they are misled; to unmask that world which smiles only to betray, and frowns only when they approach the avenues that lead to Heaven. Let us show them the deadly sting with which sin is armed; and throw off the unprofitable robes with which Religion hath been clothed: let us sow in their tender minds the seeds of piety and knowledge, and be assured that of the same nature the seed is, so will be the harvest. The virtues which have taken root in infancy will flourish and bear fruit in the maturity of manhood.

It is impossible to foresee what influence the children of our neighbourhood may have at some future time upon the happiness of society, either in a public, or a private station; nor how greatly the comfort of our last days may depend upon them. In the children that we now contemplate as the objects of our care and instruction, you behold your future neighbours, servants, and connexions. These will be the men and women to whom you will have to entrust your property, and your lives: to whom you must unite your sons, and your daughters. How do you know but that in the School now established in your Parish, the seeds of honor and virtue may be implanted in the heart of him, to whom, at some future time, you will commit the happiness of your darling child; and who, without that benefit, might be a licentious reprobate, laying waste the fair fabric, you now admire and love so much, bringing both guilt and misery into that heart which would otherwise have enjoyed the peace of innocence? It was a beautiful, as well as a wise saying of Solomon's, "Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days."

If we look at the subject in the other point of view which I alluded to, we shall find it equally important. These children will have to fulfil public, as well as pri-

vate duties, and it depends in a great measure upon their present training, how they fulfil them. Inculcate the principles of virtue and wisdom, and you will give to your Monarch loyal subjects; and to your Country honest and judicious patriots.

Education, and especially such education as is connected with, and built upon a religious foundation, is calculated to ennoble the human character, and raise it to the highest state of dignity, that it is capable of attaining: to give it not only grace, but usefulness: not only virtuous feelings, but power to exercise them; and man is called upon by a thousand precepts scattered through the inspired volume, to improve, as far as he may, that understanding which Providence, in its wisdom, hath thought proper to endow him above every other creature in the Universe. “Apply thine heart unto instruction, and thine ears to the words of knowledge,” says Solomon. Indeed this great and wise Monarch only preached the doctrine he himself practised; for when GOD gave him a choice of blessings, he preferred “a wise and understanding heart” beyond every thing else. GOD was pleased with his choice, and gave him not only what he desired, but also a large proportion of whatever else is agreeable to the human heart: long life, riches, power, and reputation; and here we may learn that he who seeks the improvement of his understanding, takes the most proper, and likely means of obtaining other advantages; and which will generally be found to be the rewards and accompaniments of religion.

Men in general are very anxious to attain the most elevated situations in society, but these are closed against the ignorant and illiterate, who have neither earned the rewards, nor are capable of fulfilling the duties of such stations: they cannot feel the refined and permanent

pleasures, which are the accompaniments of a cultivated mind; and but little more than those corporeal gratifications which are no sooner tasted than they die away, leaving behind, if not misery, at least disgust. Sensual delights are indeed tempting to us all, but, like the beautiful clusters of Sodom and Gomorrah, they yield only the bitterness of gall; and the man who seeks no mental improvement, may be said to taste but little that is better in this life. He who has a well stored mind may even in solitude find delightful occupation for his thoughts: he can clothe a Desert with the beauties of Eden, and people it with every sage that has lived. He can do more: he can hold sweet and sublime converse with his Maker; for in all the varied productions of nature; in every object that meets his eye, whether it be living or inanimate, he discovers the great Creator who meets him at every turn, and whose Spirit is ever ready to hold discourse with the children of virtue and intelligence. "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from Thy Presence? If I ascend up into Heaven, Thou art there: if I make my Bed in Hell, behold Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me."

We shall be inclined to attach great value to education when we consider that the perfection which has already been obtained, and that we still hope to obtain, in all the arts and sciences, has been, and must continue to be, the consequences of it. Without it how would the Poet have given us his lays, or the Philosopher his instructions? How should we have known the secrets which the Astronomer has unveiled, or the properties of the ten thousand useful things which the Chymist has analyzed? Even the common arts of life owe much of

their great advancement in modern days to the general thirst of knowledge, which leads thoughtful men to make up for their deficiencies in learning during those hours which are left after the necessary labors of the day. The pursuit of knowledge is by no means incompatible with that ease which is required, by the weariness of the limbs, and a wise man will waste no time that may be usefully employed. How many examples does the world afford of persons raising themselves from the lowest depths of obscurity to a state of honor and high consideration: of men, who in youth were in comparative ignorance; but who, long before they had spun the thread of life, saw their names stand conspicuous on the roll of Science! And all this achieved in those hours which the unthinking multitude waste in idleness and dissipation. To such men, (combining theory with practice) we are indebted for many of our most valuable discoveries, as well as our greatest improvements in all the useful arts; and they, while they have secured a never fading lustre to their own names, and substantial additions to their own property, have at the same time greatly advanced the comfort, the prosperity, and the wisdom of mankind in general. Even Religion itself: even the benevolent scheme of Providence for the salvation of the world (I speak it with reverence) may be advanced by the improvement of men's minds; for we see that GOD works by human agents, and no doubt one reason why He commands us to seek instruction, is, that we may be more fitted to accomplish His high designs; and thus we see one of the strongest motives that can possibly be urged to make us encourage education.

In a man's hours of sickness and sorrow, when the merriment and dissipation of the world seem but as bitter mockery of his pains, how soothing are the contemplations

learn this fact. We are created for a higher and nobler state of being than the present; and this is only the beginning of our existence. Our future destiny is covered with a veil that has only been partially thrown aside, but whatever it may be, we are told that now we must prepare ourselves for it, and that we can only do so by a life of holiness and obedience to GOD'S commands. Man was no doubt, at first, made fit to be a Tenant of Heaven, and the companion of Angels; but he lost his purity, and there is now a stain to be washed from his soul, and he must regain the worth and dignity that was forfeited, when Adam fell. To accomplish this, our first object must be to detach our minds from low and groveling things, and employ them in those that are noble, and pure, and holy: we must turn our eyes from Earth to Heaven, and catch a spark of that pure light which gives glory and intelligence to the inhabitants of that happy place. This, if obtained, will purify our hearts, and enlighten our understandings, and raise our desires from things corrupt and evanescent, to those which are holy and immortal. It will make us fit to stand in His presence who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. And shall we look to Heaven in vain for a portion of its enlightening and regenerating Spirit? No, thanks be to GOD! He hath promised to give to those who ask. "If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him." Without this Holy Spirit our best endeavours will be vain and fruitless, for we are told we can do no good thing without divine assistance; but with it, we may secure our everlasting salvation: peace here, and bliss hereafter. It continually points to Heaven, and the glory of GOD, as the only worthy objects of all our exertions; and especially in

regard to the instruction of youth it says, lead them in the way everlasting, and give them such knowledge as will tend to the salvation of their souls. Whatever knowledge you instil, it must be made subservient to that end; and every child ought to understand that although it may acquire various kinds of knowledge, and be employed in various kinds of duties, yet they must all lead to one point; and that whatever prize is sought for, as a subordinate object, the great, the all-engrossing, the only valuable prize, is Heaven.

Of all the sources from whence we may obtain wisdom there is one superior to all others, and that is, the Holy Scriptures, the light which came down from Heaven to dispel those clouds of ignorance which overshadowed the world: which hid, as it were, the glories of the Deity from the human race. Here we must come to learn true wisdom, and it is this book which must be the first object of our consideration. Others (I mean such as are not opposed to virtue) are occasionally well deserving of our attention, as they may all have a tendency to the enlargement of the mind, and so forward the designs of Heaven; but it is the Holy Bible, the inspired word of GOD, that must be our constant companion: from all other studies we must perpetually revert to this, as religion must be the final object of all our pursuits; and he who is seeking to obtain knowledge for any other purpose, is but recommitting the Sin of Adam, who sought to know more than was consistent with virtue, and the will of Heaven; and thus covered himself with shame; and thus brought down ruin, not only upon his own head, but upon those of his posterity. If Religion be not instilled into the minds of your Pupils, it will be in vain to look for any good results: in vain, as it regards any real benefit, will you have given them an education: in vain

will they possess abilities, however splendid. You will be only spending your "money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which satisfieth not."

The mode of education adopted in these days, and the requisitions of Society to qualify a man to fill any important station, make an acquaintance with the dead languages in some measure absolutely necessary, and we bow to the urgent demand. The foundation of such learning as the world requires, is provided for in your School; but we hope and trust that such a pursuit will not be made (as is too often the case) a sole object, and an obstruction to all better learning. See that your children acquire such knowledge as will make them useful members of Society, and good christians. When they come forward to play their part in the world as men and women, let it be seen that their light, whatever it may be, was obtained from no unhallowed altar, but from the altar of the Lord. It is a credit to any one to be well grounded in all respectable School learning: but the boy who is best acquainted with his Bible, and can give the best account of his Christian faith, will be far more esteemed than him who has mastered every other study: and so also will that Teacher be most encouraged, who makes such knowledge the first object of his care and exertions.* I certainly speak now only as an individual, but I believe that I express the sentiments of all the Trustees.

It is a pity that men do not more generally employ their time in the study of GOD'S word; for if they did, they would discover in it wisdom and beauty far greater

* It is surely unnecessary to recommend to the Parents a kind and friendly demeanor towards him whose time and talents are employed in the care and instruction of their children. Perhaps no stronger claim to encouragement can be advanced, than that of a Teacher who honestly fulfils his arduous and often painful duties.

than what may be found in any other composition: but they seek employment for their minds in any way rather than this; for they consider the study of religion as sad and gloomy, when in fact it is full of joy and happiness. How is it described in the words of inspiration? "His ways are ways of pleasantness, and all its paths are peace." Consider for a moment what it leads to hereafter: the blessedness of Heaven, and rest for ever! Could men be brought to see the happiness and glory that is set before them in this way, they would no longer hesitate, but bursting those trammels that bind their thoughts to earthly things, they would earnestly seek the wisdom that cometh from above.

Let us never forget that the minds we have received from Providence are to be enlarged, and our dispositions improved; and that he who hath brought forth no fruit unto GOD; who hath made no spiritual advances; who hath had an immortal Spirit consigned to his care, and hath neglected his important charge; he is the man of whom it may be said, he is truly wretched and contemptible: and his wretchedness will last for ever.

Then let us habituate our children to the pursuit of wisdom, and especially religious wisdom; and let the first and last book we put into their hands be the Bible. This was given to show how the natural guiltiness of the heart might be expelled; and how the child that was born in sin, might die in grace; and when GOD made His first communications, He said, teach them to thy children, and to thy children's children.

THE END.

The following is a list of the names of the persons who have been appointed to the various offices of the County of Los Angeles, California, for the term of four years, commencing on the 1st day of January, 1901, and terminating on the 31st day of December, 1904:

Office	Name
County Clerk	John W. Smith
County Treasurer	James H. Brown
County Assessor	William C. Jones
County Engineer	Robert L. White
County Surveyor	Charles E. Black
County Jailor	Thomas A. Green
County Coroner	George F. Hall
County Sheriff	John D. King
County Auditor	Frank M. Lee
County Controller	Edward R. Clark
County Registrar	Henry J. Adams
County Recorder	Samuel B. Miller
County Clerk of the Board of Supervisors	David G. Wilson
County Clerk of the Board of Education	John F. Taylor
County Clerk of the Board of Public Works	Richard H. Scott
County Clerk of the Board of Health	Joseph K. Young
County Clerk of the Board of Charities	Benjamin F. Baker
County Clerk of the Board of Prisoners	George W. Davis
County Clerk of the Board of Lunatics	Charles L. Evans
County Clerk of the Board of Deaf and Dumb	Thomas H. Reed
County Clerk of the Board of Blind	John A. Cook
County Clerk of the Board of Idiots	William B. Allen
County Clerk of the Board of Paupers	Robert C. Wright
County Clerk of the Board of Soldiers and Sailors	James E. Hill
County Clerk of the Board of Veterans	George A. Nelson
County Clerk of the Board of Widows	Charles F. Phillips
County Clerk of the Board of Orphans	Thomas J. Campbell
County Clerk of the Board of Children	John H. Parker
County Clerk of the Board of Young Men	Richard D. Mitchell
County Clerk of the Board of Young Women	Joseph L. Roberts
County Clerk of the Board of Married Women	Benjamin H. Turner
County Clerk of the Board of Single Men	George K. Brown
County Clerk of the Board of Single Women	Charles J. White
County Clerk of the Board of Married Men	Thomas R. Black
County Clerk of the Board of Married Women	John A. Green
County Clerk of the Board of Widowers	William C. Hall
County Clerk of the Board of Widows	Robert L. King
County Clerk of the Board of Orphaned Children	Charles E. Lee
County Clerk of the Board of Abandoned Children	Thomas H. Clark
County Clerk of the Board of Neglected Children	John F. Adams
County Clerk of the Board of Delinquent Children	Samuel B. Miller
County Clerk of the Board of Pauper Children	David G. Wilson
County Clerk of the Board of Pauper Women	John F. Taylor
County Clerk of the Board of Pauper Men	Richard H. Scott
County Clerk of the Board of Pauper Children	Joseph K. Young
County Clerk of the Board of Pauper Women	Benjamin F. Baker
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County Clerk of the Board of Pauper Children	Thomas H. Clark
County Clerk of the Board of Pauper Women	John F. Adams
County	

A

J. H. 1830

S E R M O N,

PREACHED AT THE

RE-OPENING OF ABERGAVENNY CHURCH,

ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER XX, MDCCCXXIX.

BY

EDWARD

Copleston

LORD BISHOP OF LLANDAFF.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR C. J. G. & F. RIVINGTON,

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MDCCCXXX.

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ST. JOHN'S SQUARE.



A

SERMON,

&c.

1 CORINTHIANS i. 10.

Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

It is a great advantage we derive from the *epistolary form* of some of the sacred writings, that they thus exhibit to us a lively picture of the state of the Church in those early times, and afford matter to us both of instruction and of encouragement under many perplexing difficulties. Had the New Testament consisted merely of a narrative of our Lord's ministry, his doctrine, his miracles, his sufferings, and his establishment of a visible Church upon earth, we should seem perhaps, upon a hasty view of the case, to have been furnished with all that is necessary for the guidance and government of Christians. But even that would have been an imperfect record of his revelation. For it was after

his ascension that the promised Comforter was sent, to guide the Apostles into all truth. That Spirit of truth constantly presided over their first proceedings : it gave courage to their minds, purity to their thoughts, rectitude to their judgments, and utterance to their preaching. It is well for us, therefore, that we possess the genuine documents, which explain to us the occasion and the circumstances of some of their most earnest exhortations ; and thus enable us to apply them to similar circumstances as they arise in our own times.

Had we no such precedents to refer to, we might often be at a loss under unexpected difficulties ; and might be accused by our opponents of setting up our own authority in repressing disorders and disagreements in the Church of Christ. It is not only then as a convincing evidence of the truth of our religion, that these artless and occasional reproofs of particular persons and particular errors are valuable : valuable they certainly are, even under that point of view, and they must carry home instant conviction of the truth of these writings to every candid mind ; but they are useful also as *warnings* to us not to fall into the same errors, and as *authorities* to us how to treat those errors whenever they do occur in the Church.

As *encouragements* also, under the vexation and grief which pious Christians feel when they see

their brethren obstinate, or disobedient, or going astray after new doctrines, and disturbing the peace and unity of the Church; as encouragements, I say, to us, when we are placed in the midst of such trials, these examples of early divisions are most valuable. If, for instance, we now saw for the first time schisms and heresies spreading through the world, contempt or indifference towards the lawful ministry and the established ordinances of the Church; if now, for the first time, we beheld unauthorized teachers come forth, creating parties, forming and organizing new sects called after new names, and the people “with itching ears heaping to themselves preachers after their own lusts,” we might be dismayed and disheartened, doubtful whether there be any true Church at all, or whether the care of our Lord were not about wholly to be withdrawn from it. But now that we know from the inspired writings of the Apostles themselves, not only that these things must be expected, but that they have been in a greater or less degree from the very beginning, why should thoughts arise in our hearts, or why should any despondency be felt, as if we were doubtful what the will of the Lord is, or secretly apprehensive of some great and fatal change? The true inference to be drawn from the wide prevalence of such evils is, that they are a lesson and an awakening call upon us not to be backward in our own duty; not to suffer any of these things to be laid to our charge; and to reflect seriously and honestly, whether much of what we

disapprove and lament has not arisen out of our own negligence and supineness *.

If, for example, with an increasing population we have not made increased provision for social worship, and for regular instruction within the pale of the Church; if, while the rich and middling classes have been well accommodated, our poorer brethren have been little regarded; can we wonder at them, can we blame them, for resorting to other places of worship, and to preachers from whom they certainly hear much of the word of God, although

* In this diocese a spirit of attention is rising towards these important duties, and a strong disposition is manifested to recognize the peculiar claims which a poor and recently collected population have upon those whose profits are created by their labour, and whose landed property is prodigiously increased in value by the same means. While I am adverting to this subject, it would be unpardonable not to commemorate, with gratitude and praise, among many large and liberal donations of individuals for similar purposes, the noble example set by two of the principal establishments in the mining district of Monmouthshire and Glamorgan-shire—the one, now belonging to Mr. Hill of Blaenavon, whose uncle Mr. Hopkins, in conjunction with his partner the late Mr. Hill, built a Church there, and whose family now support one of the largest and best schools in the country in connexion with the Church, built and endowed by the surviving sister of Mr. Hopkins: the other is an equally munificent and more recent act of Mr. Guest, of Merthyr-Tidvill, who has not only built a Church within these few years at an expence of near 2000*l.* but who provides most liberally, until an adequate endowment can be legally annexed, both for the service, and for every thing that can conduce to the decency and solemnity of public worship, according the rites of the Church of England.

mixed with error and enthusiasm, and although derived from no better authority than the impulse of their own minds, or the appointment of individuals equally self-constituted with themselves ?

The language I now use may sound to some ears, in this age of affected liberality, harsh and intolerant. But it is a perversion of the term liberality to apply it to those whose opinions and principles sit loose upon them, or, as is not unfrequently done, to those who have no religious principles at all. True liberality consists, if I know any thing of the force or meaning of words, in bearing with those who differ from us, in using them kindly, gently, and respectfully ; not in sinking the difference that subsists between us upon matters of high importance ; not in explaining it away, and pretending to treat it lightly ; not in surrendering sacred truths, in order to catch temporary applause or popularity. For if these things are held to be matters of indifference, what merit is there in tolerating them ? How can that be called liberality, which concedes nothing ? Or if they be not matters of indifference, how can that be called candour or charity, or even honesty, which tends to confirm men in error, to separate them from the true Church, and thus to hazard their future salvation ?

If I were asked for a model of true liberality in religious matters, I would refer to the beautiful

apostrophe of one who had been himself reviled, insulted, persecuted even to the death, with the utmost rage and violence by the very people of whom he thus speaks. “ Brethren, my heart’s desire and
 “ prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be
 “ saved. For I bear them record that they have
 “ a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge *.”

Be it our care to imitate the bright example of St. Paul in endeavouring to bring back the sheep that go astray, to explain to them and to keep constantly before their minds the sacred, the indispensable duty of maintaining a strict communion with that Church which Christ founded, if they would secure to themselves the benefits which he promised to that Church, and which he purchased with his own blood.

And here not only candour and equity, but a just sense of the constitution of Christ’s Church, compels me to draw a marked line of distinction between those whose religious assemblies are supplementary, as it were, to our own establishment, offering spiritual comfort and instruction to hundreds unable to find it elsewhere, and those organized communities which exclude from their society any that communicate in the blessed sacrament of the Lord’s Supper with the national Church.

* Rom. x. 1.

Of the former I would not only think and speak mildly, but in many cases I would commend the piety and zeal which animates them, full of danger as it is to depart from the apostolic ordinance, even in matters of outward discipline and order. The author and founder of those societies (for he was careful himself to keep them from being formed into a sect) was a regularly ordained minister, a man orthodox in his belief, simple and disinterested in his own views, and adorned with the most amiable and distinguishing virtues of a true Christian. He found thousands of his countrymen, though nominally Christians, yet as ignorant of true Christianity as infidels and heathens; and in too many instances (it is useless to conceal or disguise the fact) ignorant, either through the inattention of Government in not providing for increased numbers, or through the carelessness and neglect of those whom the national Church had appointed to be their pastors.

But the beginning of schism, like that of strife, is as when one letteth out water. The gentle stream of piety and benevolence in which this practice originated, irrigating only and refreshing some parched or barren lands, soon became a swelling and rapid torrent, widening as it flowed on, and opening for itself a breach, which it may yet require the care and prudence of ages to close. And even the pious author himself was not proof against that

snare of Satan, which, through the vanity and weakness of human nature, led him in his latter years to assume the authority of an apostle, and to establish a fraternity within the Church, to be called after his own name, and to remain a lasting monument of his activity and zeal. But over errors such as these let us cast a veil; and rather rejoice in reflecting on the many whom he reclaimed from sin and wickedness, and taught to seek for salvation through the merits of their Saviour.

Of such I repeat, wherever a like deficiency of religious means is found, we ought to speak not only with tenderness, but with brotherly love and esteem. Far different is *my* judgment at least of those who seek to create and to perpetuate separation from the Church, who even venture (for such I hear there are in this place and neighbourhood) to forbid their followers to hold communion with the national Church, who even threaten them with expulsion from their own society, if ever they receive the blessed sacrament of the Lord's Supper at our hands. What is this, my brethren, but to tear asunder the very body of Christ, to set up an altar of their own, in opposition to that which no one, not even our bitterest enemies of the Protestant faith, ever denied to be duly served by us; and at which many even of the corrupt Church of Rome allow us to be equally authorized to serve with themselves. Of such teachers then I do not hesi-

tate to say, in the language of the Apostle, that “when the Lord Jesus Christ shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom,” he will require the souls of these his injured and deluded servants at their hands.

Of these too, it is often observable that they do not come in to supply the defect of the regular ministry, cultivating only a waste and neglected vineyard, and bringing the tidings of the Gospel to a benighted or forgotten people. Too often is it the very reverse of all this; too often is a conscientious and zealous minister molested in his sacred duty, thwarted in the most holy exercise of his functions, and defrauded of those disciples whom he was willing and anxious to train in the right way. Where the harvest is indeed plenteous, and the labourers are few, we cannot blame the services even of those whom our Lord hath not hired. But to enter upon another man's labours—to draw away the sheep of his fold—to weaken their reverence and attachment to their appointed guide, when he is still at his post, and faithful to his charge, is conduct which stands plainly condemned in almost every page of the apostolic writings, and is one of those acts of disobedience which, although I never wish to see them punished by human laws, will doubtless incur the displeasure of Him that judgeth righteously at the last day.

Widely different from this scheme of discord and confusion—different both in its principle and its performance—was that glorious reformation of our national Church from the errors and corruptions it had contracted during its long subjection to the see of Rome. The great authors of that liberation from foreign dominion and from the spurious doctrines and superstitions which had well nigh extinguished the true light of the Gospel, acted upon a principle the very reverse of that which the self-constituted preachers and their abettors profess as the charter of their liberties. Instead of asserting the right of free choice in each individual, they were anxious to conform as closely as possible to the model of the Church of Christ in the apostolic age. They knew that Christ founded his Church upon the Apostles and Prophets; that he had appointed divers orders of men in it from the first; and that the whole fabric, fitly joined together, had been governed by ministers lawfully appointed, and continued in due succession to the present time. They carefully compared the corrupt state of religion, as they then found it, with its pure and original state, as it existed in the earliest churches, and their sole object was to restore it to its primitive lustre and purity. Well aware how prone mankind are to run from one vicious extreme to another, their study was to moderate the passions of men naturally excited at the discovery of fraud

and imposture—to preserve all that was agreeable to Scripture—all that tended to edification—all that was sanctioned by the practice of the pure and uncorrupt ages of Christianity. Thus, while they cast off the dross, they were careful to retain the precious substance, whenever they could ascertain it—to prove all things—to hold fast that which was good.

Hence it is that we justly assert our claim to the common title of Catholic or Universal Church. Never let us concede that honourable appellation as exclusively belonging to those who adhere to the corruptions of the Romish See*. We recognize them indeed as a branch of the Catholic Church, but a branch woefully blighted and diseased; and we would gladly lend them the right hand of fellowship, if they would accept it, in purging that corrupt branch, that it may bring forth good fruit. We have, in fact, not renounced *them*, but we have renounced their *errors* and their *false doctrines*. It is they who have cast us off, by censures and excommunications, because we denied their spiritual sovereignty over us†. We are no heretics, no sec-

* See note at the end.

† “ It was not we, but the Court of Rome itself, that first separated England from the communion of the Church of Rome, by their unjust censures, excommunications, and interdictions, which they thundered out against the realm, for denying their spiritual sovereignty by divine right, before the Reformation

taries, no newly-erected or self-constituted society. We trace our line of Bishops and Presbyters in unbroken succession to Jerusalem that was, and we trust in Christ, who has promised to be with us unto the end of the world, that this succession will continue uninterrupted until the triumph of the saints in the New Jerusalem in heaven.

One of the most illustrious proofs of the Christian moderation and good sense with which the Reformers of our Church executed their great work consists in the Liturgy they compiled, and which serves all the purposes of public worship at the present day. Yet are the main parts of that Liturgy derived from the forms in use during our subjugation to the Romish See. Not a few indeed have descended from the most ancient and the purest times; but much also is preserved from those middle ages, when false doctrines and superstitious ceremonies grew up with, and even choked the good seed of eternal life. Yet did these wise and

made by Protestants.”—*Archbishop BRAMHALL's Just Vindication of the Church of England*, Chap. IX. p. 127. Quoted by the Bishop of Down and Connor, in the Notes to his late Sermon preached at Dublin, on “The Visible Church of Christ.”

The motto of this excellent discourse ought to be the motto of every member of the Church of Engand. “My name is CHRISTIAN; my surname is CATHOLICK. By the one I am known from *Infidels*, by the other from *Hereticks* and *Schismatics*.”

holy men content themselves with casting the bad away, while they carefully preserved whatever either in sentiment, or language, or dress, or ceremony was decent and solemn, and agreeable to God's word, and tending to edification.

Now to the use of this form of public prayer, together with the rites and ordinances prescribed therein, does the apostolic precept of my text principally apply. Let there be no causeless divisions and innovations, no presumptuous conceit in a man's own opinion, opposed to the authorized regulations of the Church. Uniformity itself when proceeding from a right principle, from a love of decency and peace and order, and from a respect for those who have the rule over you in spiritual matters, is a lovely and a praise-worthy thing, and is doubtless pleasing in the sight of God. Still more is it pleasing to him when the heart is moved by what the lips utter, and feels its devotion heightened by sympathy with those around us ; when all with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. And truly there is not a more affecting, I had almost said a more sublime spectacle, certainly not one which we have reason to think the angels in heaven contemplate with more joy, than that of a congregation united in heart and voice, and guided by those whom the authority of Christ their Saviour has set over them, offering the tribute of praise and thanksgiving to

the Father of mercies, for those blessings which, through the medium of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, have been bestowed upon them.

It is one of the great improvements of the reformed Liturgy over the practice of the Romish Church, that the **WHOLE CONGREGATION** are thus invited to take part in the service, instead of gazing merely upon the ministration of the priests, or listening to the prayers and the exhortations uttered by *them*. This participation is of two kinds, one in the act of devotional singing, the other in uttering aloud some appointed portions of the service, either jointly with the minister, or in due connexion with his words. Upon both these subjects I am desirous of using this opportunity briefly to address you, and I trust you will receive what I say as coming from one who is not seeking to magnify his office, but to impress upon your minds the sentiments which have been long familiar to his own, and which he is persuaded will tend, if generally adopted, to the comfort and the well-being of the Church.

Few things are more interesting and affecting in public worship than pure Psalmody, or can boast a higher sanction from the practice of the Apostles, and even of our Lord himself; and those of the congregation who cultivate the talent they may possess, for the purpose of leading and encouraging

the rest in this interesting duty, are justly entitled to our commendation and our thanks. Yet there are few things which stand more in need of discreet and sober regulation than Church Psalmody. Daily experience proves that it is liable to abuse, to excess, and to improprieties of various kinds. In some instances it has been carried so far as to absorb a great portion of the time required for other duties: in others it has imperceptibly become rather a display of skill, or more frequently an attempt at that display, instead of the sober and devout service of a brotherhood met together in Christ's name for their common edification.

The danger of these irregularities points out the reasonableness, or rather I might say the necessity of vesting a discretionary controul in the ministers of the Church; and I cannot but think that every considerate and candid person will cheerfully conform to what is thus directed by proper authority, and in all cases where the humours and inclinations of men disagree, will support by his example and influence that authority which is instituted for the peace and common benefit of the whole. To the ministers themselves, in the exercise of this discretion, I would strongly recommend them, as a general guiding principle, to prefer that mode of Psalmody which, being plain, grave and solemn, is likely to induce the largest portion of the congregation to join in performing it.

But it is not by the introduction of Psalmody only, as I before observed, that the framers of our Liturgy provided for the union of the whole congregation in social worship. You perceive, by the structure and order of the prescribed service, that a part is studiously allotted to the people, as well as to the minister; a part which those who have a just regard for spiritual ordinances must admit to be their duty to perform, although the omission may be countenanced by numbers equally silent; or where numbers do join, yet may in the multitude escape observation.

And here, my brethren, permit me to speak freely with you upon a point, which is really of greater importance than is commonly imagined. This is one of the grand characteristics which distinguishes our service from the corrupt ritual of the Church of Rome; and I grieve to see it either coldly and carelessly performed, or even, as is too often the case, absolutely and systematically neglected. But is it not doing despite to that Church of which you are incorporated members, thus wilfully to refuse compliance with one of her established ordinances? Is it not inconsistent with the very idea of social worship (one great benefit of which is to kindle a common feeling, and to animate a torpid spirit) to remain silent yourselves, when it belongs to you to utter with your lips the beautiful language of a Liturgy, the purest perhaps and the most com-

plete that was ever in use with any community of Christians. Surely if the heart is ready, the tongue will not refuse its office. Does not nature itself dictate this office as an evidence of internal approbation and consent to what is then doing? And if we withhold that token of fellowship and goodwill, must it not at least impress those around us with an idea of our indifference, and must it not tend to damp and to deaden that feeling of devotion in others, which we ought rather to assist and to encourage by our own example?

In the act of *Psalmody*, it is true, many a willing heart may feel an inability to participate, and a fear lest the service should be hindered and impaired rather than aided by their means. But it is not so, it never can be so, with the *responses* appointed for the congregation. In this solemn service all voices may, and you will bear with me, I trust, when I add, all ought to join. It is a holy chorus, which doubtless ascends to the throne of grace not less acceptably or less effectually than the more melodious strains of music, and which cannot but be pleasing before God, when it proceeds from his creatures assembled in the name of their Redeemer, and conforming to the rule of that Church which he founded and purified for himself, and in which he is, and ever will be, invisibly present unto the end of the world.

I have dwelt longer perhaps upon this point than its importance may, in your estimation, seem to warrant. But a true churchman, or what is nearly the same thing, a sincere, devout, and humble Christian, will never deem any thing slight or unimportant which belongs to the public service of God : and if he knows that it not only is required of him by competent authority, but that his brother may be edified, and comforted, and encouraged in well-doing by his example, he will feel it to be a social as well as a sacred duty not to be found wanting.

If we find that many are drawn away from us by the arts of those who love to sow divisions, and to form separate societies, and to keep alive party spirit, let us not indeed imitate those arts, successful as they may be in winning over adherents ; but let us at least neglect nothing which our own Church enjoins, and wisely enjoins, both as agreeable to ancient practice, and as tending to interest and to engage the hearts of men. Instead of being a cold, lifeless looker-on upon divine service, the true churchman feels that he has a part to perform in the congregation of his brethren ; and if he knows that nothing is more catching than the example of indifference, he will be careful not to let his apparent inattention become a snare to his weaker brethren.

Happy indeed is that parish in which all are able and willing to unite in public prayer, in hearing God's word read and explained, and in participation of the Holy Communion, according to the pattern left us by the earliest times, and at the hands of their Lord's appointed ministers. But where this blessing cannot be had to the degree we would earnestly desire, still let nothing be wanting on our part that may conduce towards such an union. Charitable and kind behaviour is due to all our neighbours, and it will tend, among other things, to disarm prejudice, and to dispose men to a candid consideration, whether they are not really pursuing a wrong course, and acting in disobedience to their Lord's will. But let not charity and liberality ever degenerate into indifference about the duties of religion. Never let it lead you to compromise your faith, or to confirm men in heresy or schism by representing that to be of little moment, which all the first teachers of Christianity inculcated in every church they founded, as most binding upon the consciences of its members.

And if, after all our endeavours, men will still be found to thwart and to withstand us, let not the temper be ruffled, and I would say, let not the heart be too much vexed and grieved, because those things come to pass which we know from the highest authority must always, in a greater or less degree, afflict the Church militant upon earth.

You know who it was that said, "It is impossible but that offences will come, but woe unto them through whom they come."

But let those, I repeat it, who purposely obstruct and resist us, and who forbid their followers to hold communion with us, let them look well to their own ways, and think upon the words of the Lord Jesus, who, in the very night that He was betrayed, offered up strong prayers and supplications for the unity of His Church, "that they all might be one, even as He and the Father are one." In that unity are we of this nation happily established. In that unity let us stand; hoping and firmly believing, that if we continue in the faith grounded and settled, He that hath called us into His kingdom will, through the ministration and the means of grace appointed by himself, hereafter present us as holy, unblameable, unreprieveable, meet for the society of the saints in Heaven.

To Him, the Saviour of all them that call upon Him in faith, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be glory and honour, and praise and thanksgiving, in all churches of the saints, world without end.

Note to page 13.

Considering the tendency of *words* to influence *opinions*, I hold the right use of this word CATHOLIC to be of essential importance. The controversial writers of the Church of Rome never fail to take advantage of the want of caution in this respect observable among Protestants. Of this a strong example is given in a recent publication, which affords a gratifying proof of the strength of our cause, and of the weakness of the Romanists, whenever they are respectively brought to the test of Scripture and of reason. I allude to the correspondence between the Clergy of Blackburn and the Principal and other members of the Roman Catholic establishment at Stonyhurst. From this interesting publication I cannot do better than extract the following passage in one of Mr. Whittaker's letters to the Principal of that institution.

‘ It was not from a love of contending about words, still less
 ‘ from any reluctance to give every possible satisfaction to the
 ‘ Romish priesthood, that I persisted in refusing the unqualified
 ‘ term “ Catholic ” to them and their Church. The use which they
 ‘ make of it, when it is conceded to them, cannot be unknown to
 ‘ you. Dr. Milner, in his End of Religious Controversy (Letter
 ‘ XXV.) says of our Church, “ Every time they address the God
 ‘ of truth, either in solemn worship or in private devotion, they are
 ‘ forced each of them to repeat—*I believe in THE CATHOLIC*
 ‘ CHURCH, and yet, if I ask any of them the question, *are you a*
 ‘ CATHOLIC ? he is sure to answer me—*No ! I am a PROTESTANT ! !*
 ‘ —Was there ever a more glaring instance of inconsistency and
 ‘ self-condemnation among rational beings ? ” —“ But,” says one of
 ‘ the Blackburn Secular Priests to me, “ where is the man that
 ‘ can or will accuse you of acting inconsistently with your religious
 ‘ principles,” supposing me to concede this appellation to their
 ‘ Church and its members exclusively ? I refer him for his answer
 ‘ to Dr. Milner, with whom I entirely agree, that a more glaring
 ‘ instance of inconsistency and self-condemnation “ cannot well
 ‘ exist among rational beings,” than that exhibited by Protestants,
 ‘ who confess before God that they believe in His Holy Catholic
 ‘ Church, and allow themselves to limit the practical use of the

‘ term to the Church of Rome.’—*Correspondence, &c. published at Blackburn, 1829, p. 14.*

There is nothing I abhor more than religious persecution—nothing I would censure more strongly than a wanton offence given to the feelings of others, on account of a sincere difference in religious opinion. Yet I cannot carry this principle so far as to abstain from calling the members of that Church who refuse to join in our reformation of its errors, by some appellation which marks their adherence to its communion, and their submission to its authority. *Papist* appears to me the most correct designation, because the differences in doctrine are often ingeniously softened down and even explained away by the more enlightened Roman Catholics, but I never met with one who did not hold that spiritual submission to the bishop of Rome in some sense or other was indispensable. The word *Papist*, however, is understood by them as a reproach. Let us then, in Christian charity, forbear to use it. But some phrase indicative of their connexion with Rome, and of their dependence upon the authority of that see, whether *Romish*, or *Romanist*, or *Roman Catholic*, I hold to be not only allowable, but highly expedient, and even necessary: and heartily do I wish that all Protestants would form themselves to a habit of thus speaking, both in public and private: for it then would never be understood as a personal affront, but as a serious and firm resolution not to compliment away an important point, in which *our* feelings and *our* honour are at least as much concerned as *theirs*.

The same caution might well be extended to the use of the word *Unitarian*, as the title of a sect; for the term properly expresses a fundamental doctrine which the Church holds. *Socinian* appears to me a better appellation. But this too I would avoid, if it gave serious offence; at the same time, being careful to make it known that the word *Unitarian* is employed in compliance with a custom, which however general, and perhaps harmless, I cannot but regard as objectionable.

A
SERMON.

57 1829

" SIN NO MORE, LEST A WORSE THING COME UNTO THEE." ✓

A

SERMON,

PREACHED IN THE

CHAPEL OF THE HOUSE OF CORRECTION,

AT

BRIXTON,

ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER XXVIII, MDCCCXXVIII.

BY THE

REV. JOHN COURTNEY, A.M.

RECTOR OF SANDERSTEAD, AND AN ACTING MAGISTRATE FOR THE COUNTY OF
SURREY, ALSO RECTOR OF GOXHILL IN YORKSHIRE, AND CHAPLAIN
TO ISABELLA, DOWAGER VISCOUNTESS HAWARDEN.

SOLD FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE SURREY ASYLUM.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR C. J. G. & F. RIVINGTON,

ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD,

AND WATERLOO-PLACE, PALL-MALL.

MDCCCXXIX.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY R. GILBERT,
ST. JOHN'S SQUARE.



TO THE
VENERABLE FRANCIS WRANGHAM, M.A.

ARCHDEACON OF THE EAST-RIDING OF THE COUNTY OF YORK,

&c. &c. &c.

THE FOLLOWING DISCOURSE

IS INSCRIBED,

AS A TRIBUTE OF LONG CHERISHED FRIENDSHIP TO ONE

WHO IS NO LESS EMINENT IN

THE FIELD OF SCIENCE AND LITERATURE THAN IN THAT OF

PHILANTHROPY AND CHARITY.



PREFACE.

THE motive for preaching this Sermon originated in an anxious desire of the author to contribute his humble endeavours to do away certain prejudices which have been very prevalent among the inmates of Brixton House of Correction ; and which, if not removed, must tend to their continuance in crime, and to the disappointment of those individuals who have benevolently exerted themselves to restore persons so situated, to that place in society which, by their criminal breach of the laws, they had justly forfeited. He lent his services on this occasion, not from any supposition that the worthy chaplain, whose more peculiar business it is, and whose zealous endeavours, every one is aware, are constantly directed to the moral amelioration of those committed to his charge, but rather in conformity with that gentleman's expressed wish that he should take a share in this work of labour and love. Some im-

pression *, he trusts, through divine grace, was made on his wretched auditors ; and as he is led to suppose that similar prejudices exist more or less in every place of confinement, he is induced to give publicity to his arguments, which, by the blessing of God, may thereby be rendered more extensively useful ; and also shew, perhaps, that the union of clerical and magisterial duties is not incompatible. He has been sorry to hear lately, indeed, of one or two instances where the clerical office seems to have been exercised inconsistently with that caution necessarily observed by a magistrate. The latter, officially, considers a man innocent till he be actually *convicted* of crime ; whereas it is the duty of the clergyman to elicit a confession of guilt. But even in these cases, a little discretion might have ob-

* The author must do the unfortunate objects of his address the justice to say, that a more attentive auditory he never witnessed, nor one where decorum of demeanour was more apparent. The different postures required by our rubric were observed in a way that might be instructive to those who meet to celebrate divine worship under very different circumstances, and the responses were audibly and regularly made. All this is highly creditable to the officiating minister at Brixton ; and the author is willing to flatter himself it augurs favourably of his flock, which had been " counted as sheep for the slaughter," and " scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd."

viated any embarrassment which a feeling of enthusiasm, perhaps, tended to create. As far as the author's own experience goes, the objection to clerical magistrates is invalid ; and in all cases he believes it to be more imaginary than substantial.

In the county in which he has the honour to act, the interests of the public would be seriously affected by their removal from the bench ; and in those counties where it is not the practice to grant commissions of the peace to the clergy, he is not aware how the services of men who have received a liberal education, can be objectionable ; unless such apprehension of misusing their power exist, as would be dishonourable in any class of society ; and where parochial duties are light, he cannot see any inconsistency in the union of such duties. Whatever profit may arise from the sale of this Sermon, it will be given to the funds of " the Surrey asylum for the employment and reformation of discharged prisoners." Those funds are not what the friends of the Institution could wish to see them : indeed, while they rejoice in the good which, with their limited means, they have been enabled to effect, they cannot but feel considerable disappoint-

ment that a charity which has such peculiar claims on the county at large, should receive only very partial support. Were the inhabitants of Surrey induced to visit the asylum, and see with their own eyes the good which is doing, it is morally impossible they could decline any longer to give it their sanction and support; and the committee do not abandon the hope that what tends so materially to the benefit of the country generally, will ultimately be taken up by government. The asylum in the Kent-Road is capable of holding 130 inmates, and at this moment there are only 28 within the walls. The committee trust some of the neighbouring counties * will make use of the Surrey asylum for the objects of their charity, and thus lessen the expense, which otherwise threatens to overwhelm them. They will not however indulge in melancholy forebodings, but place their trust in Him with whom nothing is impossible.

* Kent, Hampshire, or Sussex.

A

SERMON.

JOHN V. 14.

*Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him,
Behold, thou art made whole ; sin no more, lest a worse thing
come unto thee.*

IN this chapter of St. John's Gospel is recorded one of those instances of divine power and divine love which distinguished the ministry of our blessed Saviour while on earth. At his word the blind saw, the lame walked, and the dead even were raised. No other power could work these miracles but that which was inherent in the Son of God, or in them to whom *he gave* the power ; nor was there any love like his love, which, after trials and sufferings unspeakable, made him content to lay down his life for those who reviled and persecuted him, " the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God."

The miracle which we are now more particularly contemplating, is that wherein he who had been

diseased and a cripple eight and thirty years, was, at the word of the Saviour, cured in a moment, in an instant of time! That disease which no human remedies could reach, or which would only have yielded to a long and tedious process, vanished at his word. "Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed and walked."

We will go a little further into the history of this transaction. It seems there was in Jerusalem a pool called Bethesda, wherein he who first stepped in after the angel had moved the water, "was made whole of whatsoever disease he had." This continued miracle was displayed, no doubt, for the purpose of awakening in the minds of men a sense of God's overruling Providence, and of preparing them for that transcendent proof of his love, in sending his only-begotten Son into the world to die for their sins. The attendant angel at the pool of Bethesda might be considered a sort of harbinger of those glad tidings, of which the Baptist was the declared forerunner. It was on the brink of this pool that the Saviour himself, who knew all things, past, present, and to come, accosted the poor diseased sinner with these words: "Wilt thou be made whole?" When the wretched man declared his own inability to help himself, that he had no one else to put him into the pool, and while he was vainly trying to descend into the healing stream, another always stepped down

before him ; Jesus, (that friend of fallen man, that only Saviour, by whose mediation *we* hope to be healed) had compassion on him, and said, “ Rise, take up thy bed and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed and walked.” Our blessed Lord had not recourse to the pool ; though, like the river Jordan, he might have used its waters, and said, “ Wash, and be clean :” but, by a still shorter process, and one unwitnessed, unseen before, *he spake*, and it was done. He who had been a cripple eight and thirty years, not only walked at the divine command, but *took up his bed* and walked. This miraculous healing of his bodily infirmities, which their long continuance had proved were incurable by any merely human remedies, had also a salutary effect on his mind ; for when the Jews found fault with the man for carrying his bed on the Sabbath day, “ he answered them, he that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed and walk.” Their cavils and pretended scruples about the Sabbath day, had no weight with *him* who felt that he was healed of his infirmity ; had no power to shake his faith and confidence in his deliverer ; though ignorant, as yet, that he who bid him take up his bed and walk, was the Son of God. Now follow the words of the text : “ Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole ; sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.”

We are not furnished with those particulars which denoted the exact nature of such long-protracted disease; but this great Physician of souls, and Healer of all manner of infirmities, seems to imply that the man's sins were, in a great measure, the cause: and we know that many of our bodily diseases are attributable to this greatest of all evils. Excess of any kind, whether in what we drink or what we eat, in whatever way we become sensualists, and yield ourselves up to our passions, in the same degree will our bodily health be affected: to this day we may behold many of our fellow-creatures diseased and crippled through habits of indulgence, and suffering, by a premature old age, for the sins of their youth.

God forbid we should assume, as a general principle, that all who are afflicted with loss of health and strength, are suffering the punishment of sin. Many, even from infancy, are unacquainted with the blessing of health; neither in this world of trial, is it always the good man who is the most free from pain and bodily ailments. Among various afflictions incident to our earthly pilgrimage, and consequent on our fallen nature, a diseased body is one, which sometimes no abstinence can ward off, no rectitude of conduct prevent, no art of man cure.

We cannot behold now the Saviour of the world followed by a multitude, sick of all manner of diseases, entreating him to have compassion on them,

and heal them ; nor hear his blessed voice, saying to the sick of the palsy, “ I will, be thou clean.” We cannot say now, that the lame walk, the blind see, and the dead are raised ; but, blessed be God, we can say, that “ the poor have the Gospel preached unto them :” and, if we believe in that Gospel, in him whose life is there written, we may still be healed of our infirmities : not, indeed, those of the body, but (what is of infinitely more consequence to us) the maladies of the soul ; those maladies which involve, not merely our temporal, but our eternal welfare. Moreover, that cleansing of the body and that healing of human infirmity, which the Saviour’s word or touch could, in a moment, effect ; were often emblematical or figurative, as pointing at those more important purifications, which his blood-shedding alone could accomplish. In the instance before us this is evident ; for he says, “ Sin no more, *lest a worse thing come unto thee.*” “ Thou art made whole ;” thy bodily infirmities are cured : let this sudden and miraculous change convince you, that it was only divine power which could have accomplished it. Shun no longer the light, nor love darkness rather than light, because your deeds are evil. Walk no more in the way which leadeth to destruction, nor indulge in those vices, which make you to prefer the dark and crooked ways of Satan to the blessed Jesus, who is himself “ the way, and the truth, and the life ;” whose “ ways are ways of

pleasantness, and all whose paths are peace." But what would be the consequence of preferring darkness rather than light? "Sin no more," says our Saviour: and he adds, "*lest a worse thing come unto thee.*" Now, if only temporal evil, some worldly affliction were signified by this exhortation to sin no more, it might be difficult to imagine a more distressing malady than that which had, for thirty-eight years, afflicted the poor cripple of Bethesda; but he is exhorted to sin no more, "*lest a worse thing come unto him.*" [The great Physician was here alluding to that *soul* sickness, which so far surpasses in malignity, in danger, and in extremity, any disease whatever which the mere body is heir to. No aggravation of bodily pain, such as penury, hunger, cold, or nakedness, can amount, in intensity of human woe, to the actual present sufferings of a guilty conscience, and the prospective forebodings of that punishment which is to follow, when the cares and ills of this life cease to trouble us. All the pains, all the grievances, all the misfortunes of this life, must have an end; that is, at any rate they will end when we lie down in the grave; but those which I am now referring to, and which our Saviour meant when he said, "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee," are the pains of everlasting death, the horrors of unquenchable fire, reserved for them who persist in their evil courses, who obstinately shut their eyes against the light, which

would be “ a lamp unto their feet, and a light unto their paths,” to lead them into the way of righteousness. Against this wayward obstinacy and perseverance in sin, our blessed Lord warns the paralytic in the Gospel, by declaring a *worse* thing may come unto him. “ Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,” was the preaching of the Baptist, his forerunner. “ Repent and believe the Gospel,” were the words of Christ himself. If, after that Gospel was preached unto them, men persist in their wicked courses ; if, after the miracles worked by our Saviour, they refuse to believe his gracious words, and to acknowledge him to be the Son of God ; if they refuse to believe all that Moses and the Prophets have written concerning him ; something worse will come unto them ; something worse awaits them than mere bodily pain : for they have not feared him who gave them this salutary warning—they have not feared God, who can punish both body and soul in hell ! We may now at least understand what was meant by the words of the text, “ Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.”

What was the permanent effect produced by the Saviour’s healing power in the instance before us, we are not informed ; but the probability is, that the first impression made on his mind, by the sudden relief he experienced in his body, when, after such long-continued suffering, he was enabled to “ take up his bed and walk,” did not speedily va-

nish ; that, with returning health and renewed vigour, he did not forget the Lord his God ; but that, as his limbs received strength from the Most High, his faith in him continued strong, and that the same confidence remained which made him say to the unbelieving Jews and hypocritical Pharisees, “ He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed and walk.” Though “ he that was healed wist not who it was,” yet, after the interview in the temple, he departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus which had made him whole. The admonition he there received, we trust, had its proper effect ; or (as we elsewhere read) “ the last state of that man would be worse than the first.”

It is time now, my brethren, that I should apply the subject of this discourse to your own unhappy case, and, I would hope, through God’s infinite mercy, to your benefit ; not only your future welfare in this world, but in that which is to come.

First, I would fain endeavour to remove from your minds any prejudices which the unfortunate situation you are placed in may give rise to.

For myself, who have this day come forward to address you, I am aware that you look on me with an evil eye : you suspect, nay, are persuaded, that it is not for *your* good I am thus employed ; but that there is some other assignable cause, some other motive than having *your* interest at heart, which brings me to a spot, where I have not, cer-

tainly, any professional call ; my magisterial duties are of a different character, but tend, I trust, to the same important result. This, also, you find much difficulty in believing : you cannot believe that I and my brother magistrates, who have imposed the punishments upon you which you are severally undergoing, are influenced by any other feelings than those of stern, harsh, unrelenting justice. You cannot believe that they, who have condemned you for a time to confinement and labour within these walls, are not your enemies. But, my brethren, reason tells me, and my heart feels, that so far from being, in any sense, your enemies, we are, in fact, your best friends. You start at the assertion, but I make it confidently. I do not say the result, either to you or to ourselves, will prove it, because the result may not be what *we* most wish, viz. that you may be convinced of the error of your ways, repent you of your sins, and henceforth walk in newness of life. All this, however, may be accomplished, unless it be your own fault ; nay, is not only one material reason for your being sent here, but the probable issue of it, if not frustrated by your own blind, obstinate, and persevering wickedness. If you make that use of your confinement here it is intended you should, if you listen to the voice of kindness and instruction, which here awaits you ; if you allow yourselves to think for a moment, and reflect on the evil of your doings, and will allow your-

selves to be checked in your mad career of folly and vice, you may be restored to your friends: I do not mean your companions in iniquity, but those fond relations—parents, husbands, wives, or children, whose disgrace and shame you now are, and whose loss of comfort, of subsistence, perhaps, is attributable to you; who, while you are shut up here, go mourning all the day long, not only suffering at present for *your* sins, but apprehensive of the final consequence of your persisting in crime. For you may at length become amenable to the laws of your country, not for such offences as have been merely visited with labour and confinement here, but such as, from their deeper guilt and more aggravated nature, must inevitably lead you to an ignominious death. No one, however hardened in crime, becomes so all at once: you do not pass from comparative innocence to every thing that is most base, cruel, and ferocious. Though the progress is sometimes dreadfully rapid; though the down-hill path of destruction may occasionally be run with hasty steps, the broad road is more frequently travelled by gradual, sometimes even imperceptible advances; *but the end is the same*, be it approached by slow, gradual, or hasty strides; unless it be forsaken, unless you turn from it, and try the narrow path that leadeth unto life, the consequence must be, a state of pain and sorrow, anguish and remorse, till, being untimely cut off from this world, you will, if

not brought to repentance, and faith in the promises of your Saviour, pass from all these temporal evils to a state where “ *the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched !*” It is from these horrors that your detention here is meant to save you ; it is to prevent such a fearful, painful termination to your existence in this world, and an everlasting state of torment in the next, that we have consigned you to the slight punishment you are now enduring : and if it be attended with this blessed effect, can we be called your enemies ? Whether this effect be produced or not, can we be called your enemies ? Most surely not. It is true the magistrate is the avenger of the law ; and though the primary object of all human penalties is the punishment of offences, yet this is, equally with every other civil enactment, in this happy country, combined with mercy to the offender. Wherever any thing can be pleaded in mitigation of the offence, mercy is proportionably shewn to the offender ; nay, an entire remission of the punishment awarded by law, is often extended to a convicted felon, if it can be done with safety to the state, and without seeming to *encourage vice*.

The various modes by which offenders so often escape justice, have perhaps this tendency. I do not mean where, on a proper representation to the fountain of mercy, a free pardon or a mitigation of punishment is extended to the unfortunate culprit. Far be it from me to impugn that glorious

prerogative of the crown, so highly prized by him who wears it; but I mean where a really guilty person, and a most abandoned violator of the law, avoids conviction, by the precision which is required, by the nice distinctions and verbal accuracy, by the nature of the evidence, in short, which must be brought forward, before twelve right-minded, kind-hearted jurymen can or will pronounce a verdict of guilty, although they verily believe and attain even a moral certainty, that the prisoner at the bar has committed the offence for which he is tried. To prevent the operation of prejudice from idle reports, and previous rumour, the presiding judge is strenuous in his charge to the jury to attend to nothing but what actually is proved in evidence, and to dismiss from their minds every circumstance which might tend to prejudice them against the prisoner. He is equally solicitous, should the smallest doubt of guilt (no matter how serious the crime alleged), exist in the minds of the jurors, the prisoner at the bar should have the benefit of that doubt; on the principle, that it is more desirable ten guilty persons should be acquitted, than that one innocent person should be convicted on inconclusive evidence.

Nor can any one lament, that punishment is often thus evaded. It offers, indeed, to our view, an important feature, a glorious instance of that grace, favour, and tender regard for the rights of

the people, which distinguishes and exalts this nation above all the nations, this kingdom above all the kingdoms of the known world. No man in this land of freedom can be immured in the darkness and solitude of a dungeon, left to pine away his life unseen and forgotten, at the mere word of a capricious and arbitrary monarch ; as still even occurs in those countries where the just rights of the subject are not recognized by legal enactments. Neither when the laws are broken, the offender taken, tried, and convicted, can any rank he may hold in society screen him from merited punishment. As our criminal code is founded on equal justice, so is it ever impartially administered to high and low, rich and poor. The first magistrate in the realm is amenable to the same laws by which all his subjects are governed ; he reigns by law, nor could *he* even violate that law with impunity. Moreover, if it be admitted (as all human institutions must, more or less, partake of that imperfection which belongs to our common nature), that in civil cases, where property only is concerned, a want of means sometimes prevents a poor man from obtaining his just rights ; this cannot be alleged in our criminal courts, where if the prisoner has no counsel, the judge himself is his counsel, and takes care of his intere~~st~~ the same anxious attention to them, th~~at~~ uniformly displayed by the gentlemen of

Nay, often and often, when a prisoner cannot fee counsel, do they, with that liberality which distinguishes their profession, offer themselves as his gratuitous advocates. I have only one more representation to make, to shew you, my brethren, that justice is always blended with mercy; that is, the provision which is made in every place of confinement for the preservation of bodily health; that comfort, cleanliness, order, and regularity, which they exhibit, and which is the theme of admiration to every foreign and native visitant of our prisons. Much in this way has been done of late years, and much of that improvement in their internal state was effected by the active, benevolent, and unwearied services of an eminent individual now no more. When sick and in prison he visited you. But in these days of intellectual advancement, it is not the services of charitable individuals merely, to which you owe such comparative comforts, but to the act of government and the resources of the country at large. All, whether legislators and rulers, rich and noble, or poor, and men of low estate, contribute justly, freely, and willingly, to the wants of their fellow-creatures, who by their misfortunes or their crimes have forfeited their liberty, and of necessity occupy places such as this in which we are now assembled; and, as I said before, it is the anxious, general wish, that *both* the purposes of this temporary depriva-

tion of your liberty should be attained ; punishment of the offence and reformation of the offender ; the former is absolutely necessary to deter others from crime ; a merciful dispensation, therefore, to save your relatives, perhaps, from the fate you now deplore ; and the latter is most to be desired, as promoting your own restoration to society.

This bright prospect is rendered more probable, now, my brethren, if that same blindness to your own real interests does not darken and dissipate it. It is your own fault, your own bad conduct, your own choice of ill, and your own forsaking of the right way, which has brought you into this place, and that you have lost your station in the world ; and it will still be your own refusal of the good that is offered to you, and your own choice of evil, if you do not avail yourselves of the means by which you may be restored to comfort and respectability.

To any one whom I now behold suffering those penalties which the offended laws of your country require, I may address myself in the words of our blessed Saviour, to the cripple of Bethesda, “ Wilt thou be made whole ? ” not merely of any bodily disease (a blessing which many of you have already found within these walls*), but of that more

* There was not one patient in the Infirmary on the 28th of December.

dreadful, deadly disease of the soul, which as it involves your everlasting happiness, is incurable by any other process than that which is divine. It is the great Physician of souls, whom you must apply to, with humble and contrite hearts, that through his mediation with the Father, and for his own name's sake, you may be made whole; that is, receive remission of your sins, and by the assistance of the Holy Spirit strengthening you in the inner man, you may be enabled to turn from the evil of your ways, and walk henceforth in newness of life. That this is your only chance of comfort for the remaining part of your existence in this world, and your only hope of happiness hereafter, I have endeavoured in this discourse to argue, and I trust with some effect; because I think your own experience attests the truth of the *former*, which may by the blessing of God, and the sanctifying influence of the Holy Ghost, lead you to believe in the *latter*. You have tried the ways of sin, and where have they brought you? Through dangers, trials, sickness, and sorrow, to loss of liberty and friends; and if still pursued, they will most probably bring you to an untimely and disgraceful end; to that place of horror, moreover, in a world to come, "where shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth."

Being once convinced of the truth of these things, that they are not cunningly devised fables,

but revealed in the Holy Scriptures, if you are, at length, penitent and believing, I have words of comfort to speak to you, glad tidings to bring you. Guilty as you have confessedly been, lost as your station in society is, destitute as you are of friends, of character, and the means of acquiring an honest livelihood, nevertheless, if you are brought to a thorough sense of your guilt, and are unfeignedly anxious to amend your lives, I come to offer you an asylum, where you will find protection, kind treatment, subsistence, and employment; where you will have an opportunity of redeeming your characters, and becoming once more useful and respectable members of society.

I have the satisfaction of knowing many, formerly as wicked and as unfortunate as yourselves, who are now living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; and by faith in that Saviour, whom they had hitherto despised, and hope in that Gospel they had rejected, are looking forward to a state of endless happiness in a world to come.

Knowing the trials and temptations which would assail you on leaving these walls, the utter destitution and helplessness of your situation, and the danger you would incur of returning to your evil courses, some of those persons whom you consider your greatest enemies open their doors to receive you, when all other doors are shut against you, except those of vice and infamy; offer you honest

employment for the present, and a prospect of being established in some trade on your quitting our Institution.

Some there are, I fear, among you, who, hardened in sin and encouraging one another in wickedness, will turn a deaf ear to this call; but others there may be, who, young in years*, and less hackneyed in the trammels of vice, would be inclined to avail themselves of this golden opportu-

* The day this Discourse was delivered, there were 172 inmates at Brixton, of which 33 were females, and 36 boys under 16 years of age. That very morning, four boys under twelve years had been discharged, the period of their confinement having terminated; and they are now returned to their former bad courses; as a man was waiting for them at the gate, supposed to be one of those abandoned wretches who train these destitute, unfortunate children, under an organized system of vice. The preacher was nearly overcome by his feelings at the sight of so many youthful delinquents (more than half being under age). It was "Innocents' day," and he thought of "Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they were not." How much more reason is there to weep now for those that are, and are under such lamentable circumstances! Well might there be in England "a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning!" Surely, something may be devised to prevent so many children of tender age from falling again into the hands of their masters in iniquity. Might they not be rescued, and made serviceable to the community, by forming them into boy regiments to recruit the army? If all the places of confinement throughout the kingdom were to give up their youthful

nity to return to the paths of rectitude and honour, were they not deterred by the fear of ridicule and the taunts of their wicked companions*.

But Oh! ye poor, mistaken, erring creatures, "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." As the blessed Jesus said to the cripple of Bethesda, "Thou art made whole; sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee;" so would I hope these words may be addressed to some of you, my brethren, on whom the confinement here, and the time which has thus been afforded for reflecting on the evil of your former ways, may have had, by the blessing of God, a sanctifying effect. As you value your lives, or rather as you value your precious souls, cherish these new feelings, address yourselves to the throne of mercy in all humility, penitence,

inmates for this purpose, it is to be feared they would compose many regiments.

* The Author saw a boy, 15 years old, at the Surrey Asylum, the last Committee day, who, though most anxious to return to honest courses, had been deterred from entering the Asylum by the wicked misrepresentation and artful purpose of a hardened sinner at Brixton, who the boy said had been repeatedly confined there. It is most delightful to see this boy now learning the trade of a shoemaker, and with a fine, ingenuous, cheerful countenance, blessing those who have been the means, under Providence, of restoring him to present comfort, and the prospect of future respectability in the world.

and prayer, that the peace of God may *keep* your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. When you came here, perhaps, you were ignorant of that religion, “ Whose ways are ways of pleasantness, and all whose paths are peace.” How unlike those ways in which you once took such delight; but of which I trust you are now ashamed. “ What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.” If persevered in, my brethren, not only an ignominious death here, but death eternal. Bless God, and praise his holy name, that he hath revealed these things unto you by the mouth of his prophets; praise his holy name, that the book of life, the word of truth, the will of God, hath been made known unto you by his servants; pray for his assisting grace, that you may, as far as human infirmity will admit, “ sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto you.” No more transgress the laws of your country, lest you be brought to a fearful end, accumulating disgrace, pain, and suffering in this world, and laying up for yourselves wrath against the day of wrath. That you may escape these evils, temporal and eternal, enter the asylum opened for those who are weary and heavy laden; that asylum where you will hear no reproaches for past misconduct, and will receive every encouragement; both of a worldly nature, and of

that which is spiritual ; where you will be freed from the taunts and scoffs of evil companions, encounter no trials and temptations while within its peaceful walls, and on quitting them, be restored to character and friends ; be restored to that place in society which you have justly forfeited, and become once more useful and honourable members of the community. There are many sins, besides those of breaking the laws of our country, which *we all* daily commit, and there are many duties, for the omission of which, we must *all* appear before the judgment seat of Christ, and where we must *all* plead guilty, and unworthy, except through his great mercy, to stand in his sight ; but he who came into the world to save sinners, will not, if we faithfully serve and humbly endeavour to obey him, be “ extreme to mark what is done amiss.” “ The wages of sin is death,” but his arms are open to those who truly turn unto him ; and “ the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” To whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be ascribed, as is most due, all praise, might, majesty, and dominion, now and for evermore. Amen.

THE END.

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SH. 1829.

S E R M O N,

PREACHED IN THE

PARISH CHURCH OF SANDERSTEAD,

SURREY,

ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER V, MDCCCXXVI.

BY THE

REV. JOHN COURTNEY, A.M.

LATE OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

“ Let your moderation be known unto all men.”—PHILIP. iv. 5.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR C. J. G. & F. RIVINGTON,

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MDCCCXXIX.

LONDON:
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P R E F A C E.

EVENTS have occurred since the delivery of the following Discourse which induce me to submit it to the public, as being in accordance with the precept of the Apostle “to let our *moderation* be known unto all men.” A plain statement of well-known historical facts, and the evident conclusions that must be drawn from them, conveyed too in a form suited to a village congregation, would be void of all pretension, were there not peculiar features in the times we live in, which render an exposition of *Christian moderation* valuable, I fear, on account of its rarity. The following Discourse is printed word for word as it was preached; I have not made the slightest alteration, because I am less ambitious of literary distinction, than I am anxious of exhibiting an unprejudiced and candid mind. Liberality of sentiment is the boast of the present day, but with what little foundation in truth much that

has lately passed in the world will prove. Does it shew itself in assigning motives for action, which the acts themselves refute, and which the high-minded actors disdain ? Does it shew itself in many educated and distinguished personages condescending, for the sake of promoting their own view of a subject, to associate with all that is unworthy and base in society ? Party spirit has ever been the bane of this country ! No class or profession is free from the imputation. All experience proves them guilty, more or less, of conduct, which, if not factious in itself, has still promoted the *cause* of faction. Look at the era of the Reformation, the Revolution, or any other period of change, and say, whether our national history does not present a picture of uncontrolled passion, revolting cruelty, and persecuting bigotry ? Whichever party has been the ascendant, have not the same sort of feelings, the same modes of action, been uniformly resorted to ? Have the fires of Smithfield burnt less vividly when fanned by Romish superstition, or Puritan zeal ? On whichever side truth has been found, have not the bad passions of men obscured its beauty and weakened its efficacy ? The aphorism, “ *Magna est veritas,*

et prævalebit," has been, generally speaking, an article of faith rather than of demonstration.

This remark applies chiefly to periods of convulsion and strong excitement; but if such violences, such indecencies, such entire forgetfulness of what is becoming, not merely in high station and exalted rank, but in every order of society, are only hushed into repose, in the calmer passages of our earthly pilgrimage, and are certain to rage again with the returning storm, is there any room for boasting? Does it not exhibit, on the contrary, abundant proof of the corruption of our common nature? During the agitations of the last two years, can one party say of the other, "We are better than they? No, in no wise; for they are all under sin. They are all gone out of the way." The path of peace has not been trod either by Roman Catholic agitators* or Protestant associators. But on every occasion of national excitement, those who act a prominent part are few in number, compared with those who

* It must be admitted that the conduct of the Irish Roman Catholics, since the passing of the Bill, has been most exemplary; affording an instance of moderation, good feeling, and propriety, seldom, if ever, equalled.

silently witness passing events. They who have called themselves the champions of the Protestant cause, are said to lament the apathy of the people ; but as they boast at the same time of the number of petitions on their side of the question, they are either chargeable with inconsistency*, or they are chargeable with something more to be deprecated. But I believe the majority of the people have been really silent, and the cause of their silence is truly assigned by an eminent minister of the Kirk of Scotland, to their having been content to leave the whole subject to the wisdom of Parliament. I can afford one proof that Dr. Chalmers is right in his conclusion, which is, that in the town of Dover, not more than 120 persons signed the Penenden Heath petition, and only 160 signed the counter petition, and this in a parish consisting of 12,000 inhabitants !

Being in early life possessed of a feeling towards my Roman Catholic brethren, that civil rights were

* They talk also of seceding from Parliament ; but if an admission of Roman Catholics be pregnant with danger, is such an intention consistent with true patriotism and a real regard for our Protestant Establishment ?

withheld from them on untenable grounds, I was confirmed in this feeling by the dying words of a beloved and respected tutor. His name and his memory are fast passing away ; but there are individuals still living, to whom I can appeal in confirmation of my assertion, that a more gentle, kindly nature, a purer mind, a more enlarged understanding, a more talented and excellent person never adorned the walls of Trinity College, Cambridge, than he of whom I speak, the Rev. Thomas Jones. There is one individual, to whom I will more particularly appeal, as having shared the friendship of this good man, and imbibed from this pure fountain of knowledge, that enlightened and liberal policy, which have distinguished his public life ; and in the pursuits of science under his tutelage, laid the foundation of that eminence which he has attained in the councils and jurisprudence of his country. I call upon Sir James Scarlett to testify, that in eulogizing our revered friend and tutor, “ I speak forth the words of truth and soberness.”

I visited Mr. Jones* not many days before his

* I believe I may enumerate, also, amongst Mr. Jones's

death, when awaking from the langour of disease, he dwelt with all his wonted energy and feeling on the expediency and justice of conceding the Roman Catholic claims ; arguing that the increased friendly intercourse which would be thereby produced betwixt the professors of the two religions, *must operate favourably for the cause of Protestantism ;* that all invidious and useless distinctions being done away, the bad passions of men would subside, and the fruit of the Spirit, “ love, joy, and peace,” succeed and abound. If the truth of these opinions passed from his death-bed with convincing force to my *heart*, the application of my *understanding* to the important subject in every succeeding year, has served only to confirm my faith in the soundness of his principles, *and I have never swerved from them.* If I have treasured them in my heart, rather than given utterance to them in public, my motives have not been those of interest or fear ; but there is a decorum of demeanour, a respect for our superiors in the Church, which no Minister of the Establishment ought to forget. At the same time

pupils, the present Lord Chancellor, the present Solicitor General, and the present Judge Advocate General.

there is some respect due to self, and if the sincere conviction of my mind is, that the new law acknowledging the civil rights of our Roman Catholic brethren will prove the death-blow of their religion, I surely can give no offence in any quarter by now publicly avowing it, after having for forty years observed that silence which Dr. Chalmers has, in my case at least, so truly interpreted.

J. J. C.

Rectory House, Sanderstead,

April 18th, 1829.

A
SERMON.

PSALM lxiv. 5.

*They encourage themselves in an evil matter ; they commune of laying
snares privily ; they say, who shall see them ?*

WE have just offered up our prayers and thanksgivings to Almighty God, for two signal interpositions of his providence, in favour of this Church and nation. It is a double anniversary, my brethren, which we are now invited to celebrate. As this day returns in its annual course, we call to memory two most gracious and remarkable instances of divine mercy ; a considerable interval elapsing betwixt these demonstrations of God's kind compassion towards us.

The evil which threatened us was, each time, the same in its nature and tendency ; and, therefore, our preservation from it, at these different periods of our eventful history, marks more strongly the interposing arm of the Almighty, and has a two-fold claim to our devout and humble offerings of praise and thanksgiving.

The service appointed to be used by our Church on this day, records the dangers from which we were delivered on it ; and the dreadful wickedness which it had entered into the hearts of bigotted and cruel men to perpetrate—dangers and wickedness, which at this distance of time even, we cannot contemplate without experiencing feelings of horror and detestation ; horror at the awful extent of the evil, and detestation of those who could imagine it.

Nor was it the cruel, sanguinary scene which would have been acted, the wide extending ruin which was to have destroyed so many of our ancestors in one awful moment, which alone excites these feelings ; but the lasting and lamentable consequences in which all their posterity might have been involved, viz. the overthrow of our Protestant Church, in the establishment of which so much blood has been spilt, in defence of which so many good men have suffered martyrdom ; and, on its downfall, the substitution of the papal power in all probability, as the immediate result, if those who conspired to accomplish it had succeeded in their operations. Blessed be God, the machinations of these deluded men were frustrated ; and as if an especial Providence watched over and guarded our most holy faith from corruption, and its professors from persecution ; the efforts of a misguided ruler, in after and more recent days, were also discomfited, his throne vacated, and the happiness of

the people insured, by the invitation of a Protestant Prince to fill it ; in whose line the ascendancy of a pure and reformed Church has been established, and hitherto preserved.

Some persons may think, perhaps, that the events to which we allude, occurred so far back in the history of the country that it is time they were forgotten, and the particular service assigned for this anniversary, omitted. But when we consider the enormities which were so near being perpetrated as on this day, and the motives which actuated those who conceived them ; the dangers which afterwards threatened both Church and State, from which we were again preserved, by the landing of a Prince on these shores, nurtured in the Protestant faith, and bound by ties most sacred, to preserve it inviolate ; we shall be convinced that our rulers do wisely in preserving these recollections fresh in the minds of the people, and in calling on them to make an annual offering of praise to Him who alone can control the unruly wills and affections of sinful men ; confounding their devices, and making them conduce only to his glory, and the happiness of his creatures. We may exclaim with holy David, “ Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give the praise ; for thy loving mercy and truth’s sake.” If we are properly and humbly grateful for such great mercies, we shall acknowledge that it is not the arm of man which getteth him the vic-

tory, nor the wisdom of man which sets at nought the counsels of the wicked. “ Man walketh in a vain shadow, and disquieteth himself in vain ; therefore trust ye in the Lord, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength ; *he* frustrateth the devices of the wicked, and putteth to confusion all the workers of iniquity. As the God of mercy and the God of truth, he will not allow the counsels of the ungodly to prevail ; and for his own name’s sake he vouchsafes to deliver his people. Not on account of our own works, therefore, or our own merits, does he vouchsafe salvation from either temporal or spiritual danger ; but of his mercy he is ever gracious unto us ; and of his truth, he will not fail to fulfil his promises ; that the enemy may not take occasion to blaspheme him, and reproach his servants ; as if their Master either could not or would not help them in the day of their distress.

Verily, Brethren, “ *Our* God is in the heavens, high over all, he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased ; but *their* idols are silver and gold, the work of men’s hands. They have mouths, but they speak not ; eyes have they, but they see not. They have ears, but they hear not ; noses have they, but they smell not. They have hands, but they handle not ; feet have they, but they walk not ; neither speak they through their throat*.”

* This picture of heathen idolatry is applicable in a degree to

Equally dull of hearing, equally destitute of power to save, in time of need, must every worldly idol prove, on which men set their affections, and say, "thou art my God."

What, then, were the means intended to be used, for the furtherance of their ends, and the motives actuating those conspirators against the public peace, which this day's solemnity commemorates?

The means so fearlessly and cruelly contemplated, as likely to promote their views, were no less than the entire destruction, the sudden and awful extermination, by one dreadful shock, of the three estates of the realm. King, Lords, and Commons, in parliament assembled, were to be cut off at once, and in a moment, by one dreadful and overwhelming power; and not only given up to temporal death, but, in the belief of the cruel contrivers of this plan, consigned to death eternal! They tauntingly taught of flames above being their portion here, and the means of delivering them to flames below unquenchable! What could urge them to these deeds of darkness and blood? Religion! The lips tremble, as the word passes them. But could it be that same religion, ushered into the world with the seraphic hymn of "Peace on earth, good

those who set up an image of the virgin, and invoke the intercession of saints, to the disparagement of the one only Mediator, Christ Jesus.

will to men?" Could it be the same religion which was *taught* by Him who came into the world, not to destroy men's lives, but to save them—by the God of peace—whose last legacy to his disciples was peace? "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you; let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Was it this religion of Christ, the Saviour, the Holy One of God, blessed for ever? No, no, no. Religion might be the plea, might be the mask which concealed their dark designs; or if they had ever professed any thing more worthy the name, it had degenerated into selfishness, hypocrisy, superstition, bigotry, and cruelty; constituting that false religion, which is as different from *true* religion as light from darkness, Christ from Belial—misleading, deceiving, and confusing the understanding; corrupting and hardening the heart.

All the charities of life, all the endearing relations which unite men's hearts by the closest and dearest ties, were forgotten; and friend consigned friend—brother, brother, to a sudden and violent death.

This forgetfulness of their common nature, this abandonment of every thing which tends to sweeten life, was the work of intemperate zeal and blind bigotry; and without remorse, without any suspicion that they were not *doing God service*, they were ready to *do* the work of *Satan*. To all this

they were stimulated and encouraged by a priesthood, which exercised an absolute control over their thoughts, words, and actions.

This is, perhaps, one of the most striking pictures of misguided zeal, which can be found either in profane or sacred history. We know how far this same zeal carried St. Paul in his persecution of the Church : and in the scene we are now contemplating, we behold men, hitherto respectable and decent in their conduct, hurried on to deeds of cruelty and blood, believing at the time, that they were acting from a good motive, and even doing God service. Such is the power of fanaticism and bigotry ! it makes the wrong appear the better cause ; it warps, and, as it were, puts the mind in fetters ; and what can be more dreadful in its consequences than this spiritual bondage ! We see how it rendered men callous to every better feeling of their nature ; we see what a horrible snare they laid ; into which they were aware, moreover, that some of their Roman Catholic brethren would fall. Notwithstanding this, they never felt, during the whole time they were communing and plotting together, the smallest compunction ; but submitted implicitly to the jesuitical reasoning of their priests, that the interests of religion required the sacrifice of the innocent with the guilty. History says, this horrible secret, though “ communicated to above twenty persons, had been religiously kept, during

the space of a year and a half. No remorse, no pity, no fear of punishment, no hope of reward, had as yet induced any one conspirator, either to abandon the enterprise, or make a discovery of it. The holy fury had extinguished in their breasts every other motive; and it was an indiscretion, at last, proceeding chiefly from these very bigotted prejudices and partialities, which saved the nation*."

But for this, then, all that was great and eminent in the land, would have fallen by one awful, indiscriminating blow! When, however, the historian says, "it was the *indiscretion* of an individual, which saved the nation," *we*, my brethren, shall be inclined to ascribe this failure and exposure of the plot, to a higher cause; to the interposing mercy of Almighty God. "Even the winds and the sea obey *him*; and he stilleth the tumult of the people." "O, that men would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness, and declare the wonders that he doeth for the children of men!" Speaking of the Jesuit, who did away all scruples about sacrificing those whom they considered innocent, with the guilty—the historian goes on to say, "notwithstanding this horrid crime, the bigotted Catholics were so devoted to him, that they fancied miracles to be wrought by his blood; and in Spain he was regarded as a martyr."

How hoodwinked and deluded the understanding

* Vide Hume.

becomes, when under the influence of a fanatical religion ; it is nothing less, indeed, than a religious phrenzy ! But in tracing the effect of this powerful principle, it would be a great want of candour, not to acknowledge that it has been manifested in others as well as those who profess the Roman Catholic religion ; and more especially, it would be want of candour, if we did not state our belief, that there always has been many most pious and excellent individuals of this persuasion. We know that some of them, who lived in the times now referred to, were strong in the indignation and horror they expressed, that any persons could be found to imagine and execute such abominations. This, however, while it forms an honourable exception for some, cannot, I fear, be claimed generally for a Church which is still subjected to priestly domination ; absolute in its decrees, and issuing mandates, for which it claims infallibility. The historian, in applying the term “ bigotted ” to Catholics, certainly infers that *all* Catholics are not bigotted, at least in the same degree ; and that as at the period under revision, so in these days, very many of that religion would disclaim and condemn the horrors that were then contemplated.

Nor would a faithful narrator of the passing scene omit to expose the same kind of religious phrenzy which influenced men who were quite at issue with the Roman Catholics, who renounced

their superstitions, and condemned their corruptions both of doctrine and morals. I mean the Puritans; so denominated, to express their anxiety to purify the Church from every superstitious ceremony and practice, which distinguished it before the Reformation. *That* Reformation constitutes the glory of England; but in remembering the evils from which it delivered us, we must not forget the errors of some who were eminent in promoting it. In their haste to get rid of superstition, they destroyed much that was beautiful and ornamental in our Christian fabrics, and would have so altered our service and houses of prayer, as to render both an unseemly and degraded celebration of divine worship. In avoiding one extreme they fell into another. This reforming spirit, also, we must with shame confess, worked in ways and by methods scarcely less prejudicial to the interests of true religion, than when directed by a papal government; fire and faggot were instruments in the hands of both, to compass their respective objects, and had recourse to, with the same unscrupulous spirit of persecution.

If the free exercise of the understanding discarded much that was wrong, it did not tend to soften the heart; nay, in this particular, I verily believe that more of the milk of human kindness was to be found in the corrupt Church of Rome, than in the stern and unrelenting rigours of puritan zeal; and it

must be confessed, that men who think there is no salvation except for those within their own pale, are urged on to the work of conversion and proselytism, by a stronger motive than they can pretend to, who are more liberal in their opinions*.

But this very fact must induce more vigilance and caution in the reformed Protestant Church, when guarding against exertions which are sanctioned by such powerful though false conclusions.

I say this without any reference to the question which has so long agitated the public mind. Great difference of opinion prevails upon it, among men every way entitled to our esteem and respect. As a humble Minister in a Church which is adorned and dignified by so much learning, talent and integrity among its superiors, I ought to feel the weight of authority preponderating; but of this I am sure, that I ought not to be forward in advocating any sentiments on the subject, which militate against theirs.

Without offence to any, however, high or low,

* Granting that the Roman Catholic Religion has not undergone any essential change in its doctrines, *is not every thing else changed?* Supposing its Priests are as zealous and diligent in enforcing these doctrines; are circumstances equally favourable for making converts now, as they were centuries ago? Is a corrupt and superstitious religion likely to be sanctioned, approved, and followed in the nineteenth century by the *majority* of the people in this country, and our own pure, rational formula forsaken? Till it is, what have we to fear?

rich or poor, I may be excused for asserting a belief, in accordance with those precepts of charity and humility, which are the chief corner stones of the Christian edifice; that whatever divisions now unhappily subsist, the upholders and abettors of each, are, in general, actuated by the same motive, viz. a wish to preserve the Protestant ascendancy. They who would grant, and those who would refuse the boon of what is called Catholic emancipation, are governed equally by an aversion to the Roman Catholic religion, and a faithful adherence to the Protestant Church. Seeking the same end, they only differ in the means; one party looking for safety to one mode, and their opposers seeking it in another. They both abominate corruptions, and departures from the true faith, and both revolt at persecutions and cruelties which fanatics of any persuasion have had recourse to.

Thus much, and *no* more, I may be pardoned for observing, on a point of such delicacy, and, as some think, *danger*.

Too much I could not add, supposing the time admitted of it, in offering up our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to the all wise, all beneficent, and all powerful Disposer of events—expressing our conviction, founded on experience of the past, that the future welfare of this nation and people is safe under his almighty protection; that we are safe in depending on *his* goodness, mercy and truth; “let

us then cast all our care upon him, for he careth for us." This advice could not be addressed to any, with such a probability of its reaching the heart, as it may to *us*, who "have heard with our ears, and our fathers have declared unto us the noble works that he did in their days and in the old time before them." *We* have been, my brethren, a favoured people, undeservedly preserved from many dangers, and visited with many blessings.

With sincere humility, then, and with truly contrite hearts, let us offer up our praises and thanksgivings to Almighty God, for all his goodness and loving-kindness towards us; for all the blessings of this life; but above all, for his inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, for the means of grace and for the hope of glory. Let us use those means, thus mercifully afforded us, and shew forth his praise not only with our lips, but in our lives.

THE END.

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S E R M O N,

PREACHED IN

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ST. MARY'S CHURCH, BEVERLEY,

ON THURSDAY, JUNE XVIII. MDCCCXXIX.

AT THE

Primary Visitation

OF

THE VENERABLE FRANCIS WRANGHAM, M.A.

ARCHDEACON OF THE EAST RIDING :

AND PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE CLERGY.

BY THE

REV. JOHN COURTNEY, M.A.

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TO THE
VENERABLE FRANCIS WRANGHAM, M.A. F.R.S.
ARCHDEACON OF THE EAST RIDING,
AND TO
THE CLERGY OF HIS ARCHDEACONRY,

This Sermon

IS INSCRIBED, BY

THE AUTHOR.



A

S E R M O N.



1 COR. xiv. 40.

Let all things be done decently and in order.

THE state of the Corinthian Church at the period when St. Paul addressed to them his First Epistle, his motive for writing it, and the exhortations (particularly that of the text) which it contains, being brought under consideration, will suggest some reflections which may be useful to ourselves, my brethren, on the present occasion. This Church, which the Apostle was, in the hand of God, the instrument of planting at Corinth, had been originally endowed with a rich variety of gifts and graces. These, instead of using them discreetly, they abused, being split into various sects and parties, and puffed up, rather than humbled by such peculiar marks of divine favour.

The Epistle opens with congratulations on their manifold advantages ; but in its progress, the Apostle proceeds to admonish them, concerning various errors

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and evil practices of which they were guilty. He not only advises them as to the manner in which their religious assemblies should be conducted, but inculcates also those moral duties which would be individually required of them as Christians.

The grosser disorders to which they were more especially addicted, he reproves with unsparing boldness. He notices also their irregularities in conducting divine worship, particularly that which arose from a vain-glorious display of the gift of tongues, by which much confusion was occasioned, and the edification of their hearers greatly impeded.

In arguing this point, he contrasts the gift of tongues with that of prophecy, which signifies the setting forth of the great truths of the Gospel; and, without detracting from the usefulness of either, he defines the advantages of both, pointing out at the same time where, in certain cases, *one* must be more useful than the *other*. What, indeed, was the original purpose of that gift of tongues which was conferred on the Apostles by the descent of the Holy Ghost? Was it not, that they might go and teach all nations? And accordingly we find that St. Paul himself was eminently gifted with the knowledge of various languages, being more especially destined to spread the Gospel among the Gentiles. But where this same Gospel is preached in any one particular Church, that tongue only is wanted, that tongue only can be used with advantage, which is

understood by the hearers. To speak in an unknown tongue, is, as St. Paul says, "to speak into the air." How can the people say Amen, to that which they do not understand? Therefore, in this case, to prophesy and to speak with the understanding, that is, so as to make the hearers understand the words of him who speaketh, is not only preferable to an ostentatious display of different languages, but is, in reality, the only efficacious mode of dispensing divine truth. St. Paul concludes the argument by admonishing them to "do all things decently and in order."

The word "decently" in the original, means modestly and with decorum; now this modesty and decorum the Corinthians violated in a remarkable manner, when assembled for religious purposes. The main object of so assembling was, indeed, defeated by this idle display of the gift of tongues, which were understood only by those who ministered; while the congregation were expected to join in prayers, in which they knew not what they asked, and to acknowledge the truth of words which they did not understand. An absurdity so glaring could not be more aptly combated by a Protestant divine, when impugning the practice of the Roman Catholic Church, than it is in this Epistle by St. Paul. The prayers of the Roman Catholics are offered up in a language generally unintelligible by those who are compelled to use them; we cannot, therefore, be

surprised that their priests continued to veil, in a tongue unknown to the people at large, those Holy Scriptures which contain such convincing proofs of their errors, and which shew their service to be a mere mockery of religion.

So much for the word “ decently,” as used by the Apostle; but he added, that every thing should be “ done in order.” This *order* was not observed by the Corinthians, inasmuch as from their anxiety to display the gift of tongues, which ministered only to their own vanity, and not to the edification of the hearers, there were occasionally five or six persons haranguing in different languages at the same time : their religious assemblies thus resembling that very Babel, where a confusion of tongues was first created.

The propriety of observing order and decorum in religious assemblies will be universally acknowledged, and the necessity of the Apostle’s admonition to the Corinthians will be clear to all, if we consider further the state of their church at this particular time.

First, instead of that harmony and union which are so requisite among people of the same religious community, we find they were split into various sects and parties. Some even had opposed themselves to St. Paul’s mission, and set up one Christian minister in opposition to another; forgetting, alas ! their common Master and Saviour, Jesus

Christ, and polluting the temple of God by their unhallowed divisions.

It was an affectation of philosophy, and a vain desire to excel in eloquence, or the beauties of language, which mainly contributed to these divisions. St. Paul, therefore, shews how little the awful truths of religion require such adventitious ornaments; nay, how much more suitable to their sacred origin is a simple statement of facts. "I came not," says he, "with excellency of speech; my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." The facts, and the doctrines founded on them, were of infinitely higher import than any discoveries which mere human learning could attain unto, being referable to the direct teaching of the Holy Spirit, not the "words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth."

St. Paul reproves their *spiritual pride*, by pointing out the vanity of all human wisdom in the sight of God. "Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?" He explains the nature of the ministerial office, and affirms, that those who are called to it, are servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. If some are gifted above others, let them not be puffed up with pride,

forgetting the true and only Source from whence these gifts do come, but remember that they are only stewards, and that it is expected of stewards that they be found faithful ; that they shall have faithfully preached the Word of God, and faithfully dispensed its mysteries. From their master they *take* all, to *Him* they should *refer* all ; especially guarding against the treachery of their own heart, and the flattery of self-love. If they meet with opposition, let them not fear man's judgment, but the Lord's, who will in the last day "*make manifest the counsels of the heart ;*" and if they are, in any gifts or graces, distinguished above others, let this, instead of producing arrogance, make them only the more humble ; for the more they shall have received from God, the more they will owe to him ; and, after all, they must with shame acknowledge, that they have neither received the gifts of God with becoming gratitude, nor used them with becoming diligence. Therefore, there is no room for boasting. This advice to those who minister, is accompanied by a recommendation to the people generally, not to be led away by the "enticing words of man's wisdom ;" not to glory in men, but to consider them as they are, the servants of the Most High God, and appointed to do his work ; to remember that they "preach not themselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord ;" that as "Paul planted, and Apollos watered," yet it was "God which gave the increase ;" therefore,

those divisions among the Corinthians, occasioned by a strife of tongues on one part, and a false estimate of man's ability on the other, was productive of confusion and every evil work, and highly injurious to the Church of Christ."

In answer to the opposition he met with from certain false teachers among them, St. Paul states his own claim to their superior regard, from his having originally planted their church. He faithfully but humbly enumerates the labours and dangers of his ministry, the divine authority by which his power was delegated, the sacred foundation upon which it rested, and the only true source from which its success could be expected ; he declares his determination to " know nothing among them save Jesus Christ and him crucified ;" he disclaims the aid of mere human wisdom, the refined speculations and the specious sophistry so prevalent at Corinth, and appeals to the testimony of God alone, for the truth of his mission.

The faith of his hearers was not to be produced or to depend on the subtilty of men, but on the great power of God, " being the demonstration of the Spirit in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of men."

Instead of those unbecoming emulations of comparatively childish things, he exhorts them to be men in understanding ; to distinguish themselves by striving after spiritual wisdom, by the study and

practice, in short, of true piety; instead of those unhappy divisions, he urges them to recollect that God is the author, not of confusion, but of peace. If, therefore, they love God, let them promote peace on earth and good-will to men; especially in his sanctuary, let them conduct themselves with that true humility and that solemn decorum, which becomes the place of their assembly: finally, “let them do all things decently and in order.”

Having taken into consideration the state of the Apostolic Church in Corinth at the time when St. Paul addressed to them his first Epistle; his motive for writing it, and the excellent precepts which it contains, especially respecting the manner of conducting their Church affairs; let us see what instruction we may derive from an application of these particulars to the constitution of our Church, its forms of prayer, and mode of conducting the public worship.

We may be disposed, and we shall be allowed on this subject, to adopt the tone rather of congratulation; for surely “all things are done decently and in order;” at least, by the canons of our Church they are prescribed to be so done: whether we conduct ourselves with exact conformity to these canons, may perhaps be matter of enquiry.

With respect to our most excellent liturgy, it would be presumption in me to set forth its merits; which, indeed, supposing it to be necessary, has been

done by divines and theologians of the greatest eminence. But its own intrinsic beauties, its peculiar claims to our attachment and regard, must be impressed upon all who use it, on every member of the Church, high and low, learned and unlearned.

Its adaptation to our several wants ; the humility, the earnestness, and the devotion of the language in which those wants are expressed ; the happy mean between enthusiasm on the one hand and coldness of style on the other, are points which force themselves on our notice. The public supplications to the Deity harmonize with what would be our individual petitions. If we are in trouble or distress of any kind, for which we would implore divine aid ; or are grateful for mercies received, and wish to offer up our thanksgivings to the throne of grace ; where could we find prayers more suitable to our purpose than those which are used by the congregation at large ?

One of the great benefits, indeed, of Church communion is, that we are united at the same moment in public and private prayer ; for we cannot fail to apply the former to our own particular circumstances, and our devotional feelings will be excited and increased by the presence of others.

The order in which these prayers succeed each other, mingled as they are with praise and thanksgiving and the reading the word of God, affords ample proof also of the discretion and piety of those by whom the Liturgy was originally compiled.

There are some points of minor importance, such as the vestments of those who officiate in our Protestant Church, and the manner in which the congregation are directed to conduct themselves with reference to the position of the body (whether it be the posture of kneeling, standing, or sitting) during the different parts of the service; all these call for our commendation, as they are reclaimed from superstitious practices, and at the same time lose nothing of that solemnity and decorum which are suited to the house of God.

I will not add any thing concerning the sacraments of our Church, because they must have repeatedly furnished subjects of discourse from this place; the Protestant Church considers them as being the only two necessary for salvation; and we must be convinced they are blessed for this purpose, that the Supper of the Lord, where we ratify and confirm our baptismal engagements, loses nothing of its religious effect by avoiding the superstitions of our Roman Catholic brethren.

Nor shall I notice the other offices of our Church, comprised in her Liturgy, because my present purpose is to apply the words of the text and the other precepts of the Apostle, to the manner prescribed for the observance of *public worship*. And here, as I said before, every thing is appointed to be done decently and in order.

The people have a set form of prayer, which is in

their own tongue, and level to the understanding of all. The advantage which a precomposed form has over one which is extemporaneous is, that the congregation can pray *with* their minister and for themselves, whereas, in the other case, they are occupied in *listening* merely to *him*, and cannot possibly (as was intended) *go along* with him.

I do not say that extemporaneous prayer may not be efficaciously used in the closet; nor would I so strictly regulate our private devotions as to restrict them to any particular form of words; but there are such excellent forms of prayer suited to all occasions, as will generally preclude the necessity of using words of our own.

In public, however, I see most clearly, with reference to the practice of other Christian communities, the benefit which we derive from adhering strictly to our invaluable Liturgy; not to repeat its merits, I see clearly, that by making use of it we avoid many inconveniences. The origin of extempore prayer was, perhaps, a supposition that it is offered up under a direct and immediate influence of the Holy Spirit; but since we know that all *extraordinary* inspirations have ceased with the *necessity* to which the former owed their existence, and we witness the successful propagation of Gospel truth, under the *ordinary* operations of the same Spirit, promised to continue with our Church to the end of time; I hold extempore prayer to be, if not a su-

perstitious certainly a useless practice ; nay, worse than useless, because the objection arising out of the congregation's not knowing beforehand what they are going to pray for, is something like that which held against the Corinthians, that it required them to say " Amen " to what they do not understand.—The prayers, I grant, are made in the mother tongue, not in one which would veil their meaning from any of those who use them, but still the congregation, by this exceptionable practice, are expected to assent to petitions which they may not quite approve, either as to the matter or the manner of offering them. For the officiating minister may be led, in the warmth of his devotion, to express himself in language not altogether suitable to the solemnity which should distinguish those who are engaged in the public worship of God ; language either too familiar or too inflated, proceeding perhaps from enthusiasm, or an indiscreet use of those talents with which he may be gifted ; in this case it is to be regretted he is not, for the sake of his congregation, restrained by a settled form of prayer.

In short, if the service of the Established Church be performed in the manner prescribed by its Canons and Rubric, where shall we find, in that which has proceeded from merely human efforts, a less exceptionable, I may say, a more faultless composition ?

It becomes him who officiates in this Church, as

well as those who compose his congregation, to conform both to its spirit and to its letter; demeaning themselves in that humble and devotional manner which is consistent with the Liturgy they have the blessing to possess; giving way to no extravagance of tone or gesture, but so to comport their *bodies*, as to prove that their *souls* are really engaged in the service; and as far as in them lies, avoiding all wandering of the mind from the solemn purpose for which they are assembled.

In offering prayer to the Most High the people should not indolently sit where they ought to kneel, or repeat such parts of the service as belong only to the minister. However minute these directions may seem, those who act contrary to them cannot be said to do all things “decently and in order.” It is very desirable that all the people should join in the use of that Psalmody which is so well adapted to give glory to God. The pious strains of holy David are not designed to be sung by one or by a few only of the congregation, but by all; *all* are required to unite in one chorus of praise and thanksgiving.

Finally, the minister, in his sermon to the people, should take care to give to those committed to his charge all the benefit which it is intended they should receive from the use of the vernacular tongue. If he clothe his thoughts in language from its coarseness or its meanness unsuited to the dignity of his office, or from its elevation not perfectly intelligible

to his hearers, he comes under the censure of the Apostle, he does not speak for the edification and comfort of his congregation. And as he should avoid all coldness of manner, so let him not give way to any thing enthusiastic or extravagant, either in his language or his action; above all, let him beware that he preach not himself, but Christ; let him “determine to know nothing but Christ Jesus our Lord.” If, in delivering the doctrine, and impressing the precepts of his Heavenly Master, on his hearers, he conducts himself in that decorous and devotional manner which is suitable to the solemnity of God’s Holy Temple, it is to be hoped the congregation will be proportionably profited, and “shew forth His praise, not only with their lips but in their lives;” that they will not stray from their own fold in search of other pastors, particularly those of a different persuasion *, tempted by the novelty and action of the preacher; action sometimes more suited to a scenic representation than to a religious assembly of persons knowing themselves to be in the awful presence of Jehovah.

* The practice of following different preachers and deserting their own minister, which is so prevalent in the metropolis, and in one eminent instance where numbers of professed Churchmen are induced to attend a place of worship dissenting from the Establishment, cannot be too much condemned, as destructive of piety and devotion, and giving proof that the persons so acting are not influenced by truly religious feelings.

But, that we may not forget a precept of the Apostle, which, in this very epistle, he especially inculcates, let us have the charity to believe that, if in our conception the action be not suited to the occasion, it is still the effect of sincere religious feeling; and though it may be inconsistent with our notions of propriety, and our wish to do all things “decently and in order,” it will not make prayers so offered unacceptable or offensive to the Great Searcher of hearts, but that with us they may finally become one fold, under one Shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord. To whom, &c.

THE END.

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S.H. 1830

A SERMON,

PREACHED AT THE GENERAL ORDINATION,

• HELD BY THE

LORD BISHOP OF WINCHESTER,

AT

FARNHAM CASTLE, ON SUNDAY, 5th JULY, 1829,

AND SUBSEQUENTLY AT THE ORDINATIONS HELD BY HIS LORDSHIP

AT ST. PETER'S-FORT, GUERNSEY, ON SEPT. 13, 1829; AND

AT ST. HELIER'S, JERSEY, ON SEPT. 27, 1829.

BY THE REV. ALEXANDER DALLAS, M.A.

**CHAPLAIN TO THE BISHOP OF WINCHESTER AND RECTOR OF
WONSTON HANTS.**

LONDON:

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1829.



A S E R M O N,

&c.

1 THRS. ii. 4.

“ But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak ; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.”

THE narratives of the life of Christ, and of holy men influenced by the Spirit of Christ, while in their course they contain didactic declarations of the laws of God, illustrate and apply the commandments which they teach by a practical exhibition of their effect upon the character of man. The circumstances which are recorded, “ happened for ensamples,” and hence the whole bible becomes the proper study of each individual. Had the truths of the gospel and the duties resulting from them in the various situations of our lives, been imparted to man, like the decalogue, as a code of laws, each

might have been satisfied with a reference to that particular portion which seemed to suit his own character or condition, to the neglect of the remainder. But by the actual arrangement of the word of truth, an application may be found for every individual in every page ; all are excited to search the whole scriptures with the attention which is only given when a personal interest is felt.

This advantage is in no case more strikingly beneficial, than in its application to the ministerial character. The inspired writings of the evangelists and apostles, in the natural current of almost all their arguments, encouragements, remonstrances or narratives, display the tone of mind and frame of character necessary for the ministry, with the most graphic power of delineation. Paul, in writing to the churches, constantly takes them to record of his walk and conversation amongst them, in a manner which portrays a clearly defined model of a minister of the gospel, and fresh touches to complete it may be gathered from almost every sentence he wrote. Those who are called to the high privilege of following the path of the apostle, are especially bound to search the scriptures for the purpose of studying this heavenly model, and to continue their search perseveringly, till their own characters are moulded into its likeness.

Perhaps the epistle from which the text is taken, the first that Paul sent to any of the churches, contains more of these incidental discoveries of the ministerial character, than any of his subsequent writings; and there are many separate portions of it, which convey the essential characteristics of the ministry with a concise completeness which is unparalleled. Such is the second chapter, which should be especially studied by every minister of Christ, in all its bearings upon their office. And such also, in a more condensed form, is the fourth verse, which I have taken for the text, in earnest prayer that the Holy Spirit may enable each of us to enter upon a profitable consideration of it on the present occasion.

I. The text refers, in the first place, to the instrumentality of man permitted by God in the dispensation of the Gospel—“*but as we were allowed of God.*”

II. In the second place, it speaks of the trust reposed in the ministers of God—“*to be put in trust with the gospel.*”

III. Thirdly, it points out the manner of discharging this trust—“*even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God.*”

IV. And in the last place, it shows the personal responsibility of ministers—“*which trieth our hearts.*”

1. In the first place, we will consider the instrumentality of man permitted by God in the dispensation of the Gospel.

This is one of the most merciful features in the plan by which God redeems sinners. Man in his high and happy state of innocence walked with God, and heard his voice as that of a tender father fearlessly ; but upon the first approach of God to Adam, when he had turned from that father and sinned, he heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden, and hid himself, and he was afraid ; (Gen. 3;) and from that day, the terror of the voice of the Lord grew rapidly in the heart, so that when He spake from heaven to deliver his holy law on Mount Sinai, affrighted man exclaimed, " Let not God speak with us lest we die." (Exod. xx. 19.) And it may be said, that even now none can hear the voice of God speaking by his holy law and live, for that law convicts every one of sin, and " the wages of sin is death." (Rom. vi. 23.) But God, who desireth not the death of a sinner, spoke with the human voice, when he proclaimed his merciful purposes of salvation, that they might reach the heart of man, overstepping his terror of the voice of God. By Christ he speaks sweetly the words of pardon, which a sinner may hear and not die. The

mercy of this arrangement is peculiarly manifest, because, in partaking of the human nature, God not only offered the all-prevailing sacrifice, but fashioned the communication of his purposes according to man's sinful unfitness for receiving them more directly.

But as man is very far gone from that original righteousness in which he was willing and able to approach God, so God has very far to reach that he may touch that banished and rebellious heart, which seeks to hide itself from him with all the subtlety of instinctive enmity. Yet is not his arm shortened that it should not reach, nor his love chilled that it should not desire to bring back the soul longest lost and furthest strayed. The Son of God took our nature upon him that he might come nigh unto us, to bring us nigh unto God. He was made like unto sinful man. He participated in the infirmities of our nature, but he could not participate in the enmity against God, which is occasioned by a sinful heart. "He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." (Heb. iv. 15.) He was delivered for our offences and bruised for our iniquities. (Rom. iv. 25. Is. liii. 5.) He sympathised with our sorrows in the suffering which sin produces, but he could have no approach to the real guilt of our sin. While bearing the weight of our defilement, he is undefiled. He came to re-

establish the original image of God in the heart of man. To accomplish his purpose he stoops to the lowest humiliation. To gain admittance he seeks to move our deepest seated sympathies. But there are sympathies in the heart of man so leagued with corruption, that the inherent holiness of Christ has nothing that will awaken them. (John xiv. 30.) Though he comes in the character of an elder brother, he cannot present himself to us as a brother *pardoned from the guilt of sin*, for though he was made sin for us, he knew no sin in its commission, which alone enabled him to know all our sin in its condemnation: and having descended as low as the possibilities of his nature would permit him, he condescends to employ the channels of corruption itself, and delegates the delivery of his gospel to sinful men of like passions with those to whom they are sent.

Thus Christ approaches the sinner by means calculated to conciliate through a kindred feeling, and thus it is that we are allowed to be put in trust with the gospel, that out of the deep sinfulness of our own hearts we may tell of the need of pardon and reconciliation, until we find an echo in the hearts of the people. We are sent with the glad tidings as fellow-sinners who have tasted and seen that the Lord is gracious. We are to proclaim the value of the

gift of eternal life as those who can tell from what slavery it is to redeem the soul, that those to whom we are sent may feel that the estimate we bring is one formed upon experience. We, the ministers of Christ, are allowed of God this privilege rather than the angels, (those ministers of his which do his pleasure,) that we may approach the people in the character of sinners, though as redeemed sinners, that we may draw them by the fellowship of our rebellion into the fellowship of our reconciliation. Yet is the influence wholly of God, by whom we are *allowed* this privilege; by him a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto us. (1 Cor. ix. 17.) He it is who makes these tenements of clay his temples, turning us from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to himself. He it is who fills these earthen vessels with the waters of his word, that they may be poured forth in a mode more suited to the defiled state of those whom they are intended to cleanse; but the instruments are chosen rather with reference to the meanness of the clay, than to the high dignity of Him who is to mould it.

And here let me turn from those on whom this privilege is now to be ratified, to invite all who are assembled to ask for the divine blessing upon their embassy, to take heed to the merciful tenderness which is displayed in

this arrangement. God measures out his love even through such earthen vessels as we are, that condescending to the waywardness of your unbelief, he may win you to listen to his message. How should this kindness lead you to seek for the power of God in his own word, without taking offence at the infirmities of him through whom it is delivered! How cautious should it make you of confounding the notion of the man with that of the minister, lest the weakness of the one should neutralize the blessing offered by the other! Is the tone of your own minds, under the dispensation of the ministry of man, seasoned with this caution? Judge yourselves, brethren, lest ye fall into the too common snare by which many are led to cheat themselves of God's blessing, because they can charge his human instrument with infirmity or fault.

II. What then is the privilege which we are allowed of God thus to enjoy? The text tells us, in the second place, that it is "*to be put in trust with the gospel.*" Various are the titles by which the Scriptures metaphorically represent the essential features in the character of a minister of the gospel. They are called ambassadors, shepherds, watchmen, stewards, overseers; here, and in the first Epistle to Timothy, they are called trustees. We are allowed of God to be put in trust of that in-

estimable treasure which he himself came upon earth to deliver into our charge. We are allowed of God to be put in trust of that heavenly inheritance which he himself purchased for his people at the price of his own blood. Well may we be required to magnify our office, so derived and so imposed upon us; but most of all should we magnify it in our own eyes, that we may be possessed of something like a proportionate conception of its high importance.

We are appointed of God the trustees of his *gospel*; by which single word is conveyed all that man can conceive of the riches of his love, and of his view of the value of immortal souls. We are appointed the trustees of his love, with the charge of apportioning the testamentary inheritance which that love bestows, according to his estimate of the value of those on whom he bestows it. It is in obtaining a right conception of the magnitude of our trust that the greatest difficulty exists. Here lies the source of our greatest failures. We do not value souls as God has valued them. We do not love them as Christ loves them; and yet we are the trustees of a loving Father's will to his dear children, and we are entrusted to convey to them the glad tidings of great joy, that "God was in Christ reconciling the world

unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." (2 Cor. v. 19.) That he so loved them, that he spared not his own proper Son, but freely gave him to be a propitiation for their sins. Should not the discharge of this trust aim at being commensurate with the designs of him who imposed it?

God's designs are mercy, and pardon, and salvation, to those to whom we are sent; and he entrusts the application of his designs to us. "He so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life;" (John iii. 16;) and we are sent "into all the world to preach this gospel to every creature." (Mark xvi. 15.) His love for sinners was so great, that it impelled him even to the shrouding of his Deity in a garb of flesh, and the bearing of their griefs, and the carrying of their sorrows; (Isa. liii. 4;) and we are the trustees of all that love. Those who are now around us, and the various numbers which have been or are now about to be solemnly committed to our charge, are of such importance, that they excited the affection of the Saviour in his work of love; there is not one individual amongst them concerning whom we are not charged with the command to offer this precious legacy of which we are the trustees.

The largest estimate which we can form of the value of one soul, is circumscribed when compared with the practical estimate which Christ has given of it. Alas! how very far short of this is the highest feeling of our hearts, encumbered as they are with corruption and selfishness; how cold our warmest love for our people; how faint our most self-denying exertions to save them! Yet are we allowed of God to be put in trust of the *whole love* of Christ to them in the gospel; and how shall we discharge this trust? Who is sufficient for these things? God has said "my grace is sufficient for thee," (2 Cor. xii. 9,) and he applies its sufficiency by enlarging our love for our people, and our sense of the preciousness of each in his sight. Their mere capacity for eternal life would make each of more importance than the riches of a whole world, which shall one day pass away and no place be found for it, when those committed to our charge are but beginning an interminable existence; and how is this importance magnified when we consider the price which has been paid for their ransom from an immortality of misery! It would be well that we should accustom ourselves, upon seeing each of the persons entrusted to us, to recall to our minds the **VALUE**—the **DANGER**—the **RANSOM**—the **SALVATION** of that indivi-

dual's soul—each of these points will suggest a lively sense of the charge reposed in us, who are allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel to them; they will all combine as strong excitements to prayer for God's all-sufficient grace, and the power of the Holy Spirit will descend upon us to work his own divine results from our weak endeavours in our great office.

III. How is it fitting such an office should be executed? This is the third point suggested in the text: the manner of discharging our trust. The apostle plainly declares this manner; his words need but short exposition. As we are allowed of God to be put in trust of a manifestation of such love as that which is displayed in the gospel, even so—even according to such love we speak, not as pleasing men, indeed, who in their natural state know not the proper object of love, but as pleasing God, whose wisdom is equal to his love, and whose wisdom directs his love to the salvation of men's souls in eternity, rather than to the gratification of their desires in time. Man has displaced the centre point of his happiness from the only object round which it can move in harmony and order, the source of all happiness—the Creator; and he seeks that it should encircle a false centre, the fruitful source of discord and disorder—self, the creature. Man

looks to himself, and lives in his own confined views of happiness, which are bounded by sensible objects, and excited by sensual impulses. Unless he possess that faith which is “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen,” (Heb. xi. 1,) the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God; nay, more, he resists the receiving of them, for “the carnal mind is enmity against God,” (Rom. viii. 7.)

This fact, and its close and important application to each of those committed to our charge, should be habitually present to the mind of every one who is allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, for it is the only producing cause of our trusteeship—“they that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.” (Luke v. 31.) Christ came not, and sends not his ministers “to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance;” and the gospel with which we are put in trust is the good news that Christ “is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” (Luke xix. 10.) The pride of man erects himself into a judge of the counsels of God; the gospel humbles the pride of man; it putteth down the mighty from their seats, and exalteth the humble and meek. This is displeasing to man, who loves not to open the door of the heart to that Spirit, which begins by convincing of sin, and shows the foulness and

guiltiness of what is fondly considered to be fair and meritorious. To please the natural man we must soften the sinfulness of sin, and magnify the false notions of his own power ; we must lend plausibility to the pleadings of excuses, and help to weigh merits and demerits in the balance of imaginary justice. But God sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin to condemn sin in the flesh." (Rom. viii. 3.) God hath chosen the foolish things and the weak things of the world, and the base things of the world, and the things which are despised, and the things which are not, to bring to nought the things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence ; and God hath made Christ Jesus to be unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, that according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. (1 Cor. i. 27, &c.)

Thus God's counsel and man's natural inclinations are so distinctly opposed to each other, that they cannot be reconciled ; and it follows, that if we please the natural man, we cannot please God ; and that if we please God, we cannot please the natural man. Therefore the apostle says to the Galatians, (i. 10,) " If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ ;" and in the

text he tells us, that the manner of our ministrations must be, “*not as pleasing men, but God.*” The soldier of Christ must expect that the service of his Master will lead him to a conflict, and the officers of his army must especially expect it; for what the great Captain says unto all, he says particularly unto them, Watch. They must be ready to follow their master through evil report and through good report, and they must be prepared to set at nought both the fear of man and the flattery of man, and with a holy confidence to speak the word boldly as they ought to speak, who being the servants of Christ, seek not to please men, but God.

But while this spirit of stable courage must ever characterize the servants of Christ, who are not employed by their master to be men-pleasers, the text displays another point of character in the manner of the discharge of our trust, which is equally essential. It is beautifully joined with the command for that courage, that it may tend to neutralize the opposition which our Christian boldness is calculated to excite. I have already called your attention to the surpassing love which is concentrated in the gospel of Christ, of which we are the trustees; and “as we are allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, *even so we speak;*” even according to the measure of that

love so displayed in the gospel, so entrusted to us. It is only to the unchanged nature of man, that this boldness and love will appear incompatible. Those who are fathers according to the flesh, experience what it is with loving severity to chasten the children of their hearts; and we are the trustees, the representatives of Him who is the Father in heaven of all whom his hand has formed; who came unto his own and loved them, though his own received him not; who is love, and who entrusts to us his gospel of love, and commands us, “*even so to speak,*” though we must neither flatter man, nor fear him, nor even please him, at the price of displeasing God.

The passage which follows the text seems to be an especial illustration of this difficult but most necessary combination of affection with faithfulness. Paul takes the Christians of Thessalonica to record, “neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know,” (verse 5,) “nor of men sought we glory, neither of you nor yet of others.” (verse 6.) Here is marked the faithful, firm, independent servant of God. Then he adds, “But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children; so being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to impart unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear to us.” (ver. 7. 8.) Here shines

forth the true trustee of all the love of God to man in his gospel, glowing in full participation of the spirit of his trust. This is the combination which will enable us to make full proof of our ministry. This union of essential characteristics is, to the ministerial character, what symmetry is to the human form—each member of the body, each feature of the face, may by itself be perfect in its formation, but if all are not united in the symmetry of proportion, the whole man is deformed. The minister of Christ may speak with the boldness of a martyr, but if, knowing the terrors of the Lord, he does not also persuade men, being affectionately desirous of them, his proclaiming will scare those whom Christ sent him to soothe, and will make sad the heart that God has not made sad. On the other hand, if his tenderness be not tempered with the courage that can probe the wound which it seeks to cure, or lay open the sore which it comes to heal, he will too often be led to speak peace when there is no peace, and will be ensnared into compliances fatal to the souls of his people. The experience of those who have been longest entrusted with the gospel of love is powerful in its testimony that God is pleased to bless with a proportionate measure of success, every comparative approach to this perfect combination; and that those who have been honoured as the instruments by which the Holy Spirit has added

most members to the church of Christ, are those upon whom he has poured the fullest measure of the spirit of love, united with the firmest faithfulness to the truth of which we are put in trust.

IV. The proper consideration of the subject as far as we have traced it, cannot fail to excite in our minds a lively sense of our own responsibility in this wonderful office. This is suggested to us by the fourth part of the text : *God trieth our hearts.* “ God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” (2 Peter iii. 9.) And if this be his desire respecting all, much more may we be sure, that he desireth not that those upon whom he putteth especial honour should perish. On the contrary, those whom he desires to exalt the most, he will try and prove the most, “ that the trial of their faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter i. 7.) It is thus that God puts honour upon his ministers, not only constituting them the trustees of the riches of his love, but calling them to a greater trial than others, charging them with a greater responsibility. By entrusting us with the gospel of salvation for others, he trieth our own hearts; a trial of so peculiar a nature as needs a pecu-

liar supply of grace to support us in it, calling for a peculiar exercise of fervent prayer, and receiving peculiar and most precious promises. The last words of our Lord upon earth were those conveying our awful commission, accompanied by that most satisfying assurance, “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” (Matt. xxviii. 20.)

We are not put in trust with the gospel for the purpose of its literal delivery only, but it is put in our charge to be brought home to the hearts of the people ; and that we may display its power over the sinfulness of our own nature, while we teach its power over the same sinfulness in others. But if we preach Christ with our lips while we crucify him with our lives, we give the name of God to be blasphemed by those who know him only by our manifestation of him ; and the living waters which, as we received them, might be “ the savour of life unto life,” are poisoned by our defilement, and become “ the savour of death unto death.” (2 Cor. ii. 16.) Who can tolerate the thought of the agony of that minister’s soul, who on the day when the books shall be opened shall hear the fatal sentence, “ *depart, ye cursed,*” passed upon the perishing multitudes who were once within the reach of the gospel of salvation entrusted to him, but to whom he opened not the stores of that treasury of pardon, when he withheld, or perverted, or

neutralized by his life, the glad tidings of great joy. God trieth our hearts with this thought : he trieth our hearts by calling us to a responsibility of such surpassing moment, upon the discharge of which he has been pleased to make the eternal destinies of thousands of immortal souls to depend. He trieth our hearts with this excitement, a greater than can be produced by any other circumstances on earth, to prove whether we have learnt in Christ the value of our own souls and of those for which Christ died, and whether we be ourselves of the number of those who receive not the grace of God in vain, and who look for their reward in the inheritance of the saints in light. This trial of our hearts is amongst those divers temptations which Saint James tells us we should count it all joy to fall into ; and which Saint Paul gloried in so greatly that he said, “ It were better for me to die than that any man should make my glorying void.” (1 Cor. ix. 15.) And he said this under a deep sense of his personal responsibility ; for he adds, “ though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of : for necessity is laid upon me ; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel ! for if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward ; but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me.” (verses 16, 17.) This sense of personal responsibility in our great office, is the

moving principle by which God commands all our instrumentality, and makes it efficient for the communication of his purposes of mercy to the whole world. May he ever, therefore, by his grace maintain in our hearts a lively impression, that in being allowed of him to be put in trust with the gospel, he trieth our hearts.

I will not suppose that at this, the most serious, because the most responsible moment of your whole lives, it will need the entreaty of a fellow-labourer in the gospel to call you to the solemn consideration of the subject before us; but believing that you have already and will continue perseveringly to lay these things closely to your hearts, I will only detain you to make a few observations of a practical nature, arising out of the different points which have been suggested by the text. Each conveys a prominent lesson, which must not be passed over without a ready application to our own cases.

1. The first point, which referred to the instrumentality of man permitted by God in the dispensation of the Gospel, must have already spoken to our hearts the necessity of a deep and abiding humility as the groundwork of any fitness to be entrusted with the gospel. It is our communion of sinful nature which may be said to qualify us to be employed as Christ's messengers to sinful man. How constantly should this re-

mind us that our sufficiency for what is done through us is all of God! How humbly should it make us walk with God! How greatly should it abase us in our confessions to him, that we may be proportionately earnest in prayer for his help to raise us! "When I am weak, then am I strong," said the apostle; (2 Cor. xii. 10;) and our weakness thoroughly felt becomes our greatest strength, for we are most efficient to give glory to God when we are least disposed to glorify ourselves. Cultivate, brethren, a spirit of unfeigned humility above all things, as the best preparation for the most extensive usefulness in your ministry.

2. While the first consideration tended to bring us low in our own conceits, it only prepared us for the exalted honour which the second assigns to us as trustees of the whole love of Christ to man. This makes it an imperative duty that to our personal humility we should add a strong sense of the dignity of our office; and being habitually impressed with its high authority and import, should constantly certify to our people that "the gospel which is preached of us is not after man," (Gal. i. 11,) that they may receive it "not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in them that believe." (1 Thes. ii. 13.) This feeling and its repeated expression are necessary to give that

tone of confidence to our preaching and ministrations which is the characteristic of faithfulness under all the difficulties with which we are surrounded. May the Holy Ghost be to each of us “ a spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind,” (2 Tim. i. 7,) that we may know how to say to our people, “ Now then we are ambassadors for Christ; as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled with God.” (2 Cor. v. 20.)

3. The third division of this text was that which brought before us the manner of discharging our great trust; and this abounds with practical suggestions which can hardly be sufficiently concentrated for expression in a few words. But if we are trustees of God’s surpassing love, and are even so to speak, let us ever keep in mind that our whole lives must bear record to this character, by their active devotedness to the labour which is so peculiarly a labour of love. Our love for those over whom we are placed must appear, not by a simple transmission of the treasure of which we are put in trust, but like our Master’s love it must be self-denying—self-sacrificing. Our people must see evidently that “ being affectionately desirous of them, we are willing to impart to them, not the gospel of God only, but our own souls also, because they are dear to us.” (1 Thess. ii. 8.)

Neither must we count our own rest, or ease, or comfort, or interest, dear to us, when any of these are incompatible with the promotion of their eternal welfare. They must not have to be told that we love them, but they must be led to remark it of themselves, whether they will or not. To this nothing will contribute more than easiness of access to their minister under all circumstances, and the habit of seeing him often in their own houses. We must readily condescend to men of low estate; as well to the poor in spirit as in this world's goods, and to the low in knowledge as in station. The people must feel that we are interested in what interests them,—in their troubles—in their joys—in their comforts—in their children especially; the parent's heart can feel that attention to a child which it will reject for himself, and may be drawn to the love of Christ by this means when it has been hardened by the love of sin against every other. It is by this minuter detail of the ministerial affection that we must trace our great Master and his inspired apostles, that we may go and do likewise.

4. The lesson which is strongly brought home to our hearts by the consideration of the fourth part of the subject, the responsibility involved in our trust, may be best expressed by urging upon you the strictest attention to personal religion. If by this charge which is given

us, God trieth our heart, “what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness?” (2 Pet. iii. 11.) If not one soul, but many, may possibly miscarry by our unholy darkness, more clearly discovered by the holy light which we hold up, how—how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation for ourselves and for others? It is a very just remark, that no man’s public ministrations will ever rise much above his private standard of holiness. This must make us reflect, that while we neglect the bread of life for ourselves, we wickedly starve the craving multitude whom God sends to us to be fed. No man will effectually press the doctrine he does not himself believe, nor enforce the duties he does not himself strive to practise. Prayer is the great mean of personal holiness, and becomes also the index of our state. In proportion as we are fervent, earnest, and persevering in faithful prayer, we are advancing on our way, and leading our flocks after us. In proportion as we are cold, remitting, and hopeless in our prayers, we are standing still or retrograding ourselves, and blocking up the road to hinder our flocks from proceeding.

I pray God that every one of us may be able at the end of our ministry to call our people to record, as Paul did in the chapter of the text—
 “Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily,

and justly, and unblameably we behaved ourselves amongst you that believe." (1 Thess. ii. 10.) The awful consequences to which I have alluded as resulting to a faithless and unholy trustee of the gospel of Christ, are powerful to act as a propelling principle to urge us to our duty; but God has also placed before us that which may act with surer power as an attractive principle, drawing us on to the consummation of our ministry, when we shall render up our account—"For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing?" (1 Thess. ii. 19.) Are not even those whom God shall give us in the discharge of our high trust, when we shall stand in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? God grant, that we may all so run the course of our ministry, that on that day we may each have many, very many to whom we may say with the apostle—"Ye are our glory and joy."

And you who are the objects for whose eternal benefit this dispensation of the gospel is intrusted to man, endeared to our hearts by the operation of that charge, and precious in our eyes, as being those for whom our Master was contented to lay down his life, those for whom he puts upon us this honour to be called his ambassadors, I would earnestly beseech you not to assist at this solemn service, nor to listen to the exhort-

ation by which one servant of Christ would stir up his fellow-labourers by way of remembrance, without diligently inquiring into the relative duties which are demanded from the people towards their pastor, seriously resolving to perform those duties by the grace of God, for which fervent prayer must be made by every one for himself. Remember, that if we are allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, it is that we may convey that sacred trust, the glad tidings of salvation, to you. If we speak according to the length and breadth, and height and depth of the love of Christ, that love is directed towards the perishing souls of miserable sinners, such as you have now been confessing yourselves before him. If God trieth our hearts, and places upon us a heavy responsibility, it is for your sakes. Take heed how ye neglect this goodly arrangement of God's loving kindness for the winning of your souls to Christ, lest it should be found on the great day of account to stand in the record for your condemnation, when it might have been for your salvation.

THE END.

LONDON :

IBOTSON AND PALMER, PRINTERS, SAVOY STREET, STRAND.

The Excellence of the Liturgy. ²⁴⁷⁰²⁹

A SERMON,

**PREACHED AT ALL SAINTS' CHURCH,
SOUTHAMPTON,**

ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 1829,

In Aid of the Societies

FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE,

AND FOR

PROPAGATING THE GOSPEL IN FOREIGN PARTS.

BY THE

REV. WILLIAM DEALTRY, B.D. F.R.S.

CHANCELLOR OF THE DIOCESE OF WINCHESTER.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

LONDON:

**J. HATCHARD AND SON, PICCADILLY;
AND H. N. BATTEN, CLAPHAM.**

1829.

A SERMON,

&c.

PHILIPPIANS iii. 16.

“ Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.”

THE apostle had just expressed to the Philip-
pians his high sense of the excellency of the
knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ; and his
readiness to be made conformable in sufferings
even to the death of his Redeemer, if by any
means he might himself attain to the resurrec-
tion of the dead. “ Not,” he proceeds, “ as
though I had already attained, either were al-
ready perfect, * * * * * but, forgetting those
things which are behind, and reaching forth
unto those things which are before, I press to-
wards the mark for the prize of the high calling
of God in Christ Jesus.”

The principle thus adopted by himself, he strongly recommends to the other members of the Christian church; intimating moreover, that if in some particulars, there existed a difference of judgment or of practice among them, God would in due time enlighten their understandings, and unite them in peace and harmony. As if he had said, "Though some of us have advanced before others in the Christian race, let us all pursue that path which the gospel has marked out for us; let us all press forward towards the prize; not running some in one direction and some in another, but observing the same rule of divine truth, and embracing the same means of spiritual improvement."

We find then, in this passage, the assertion of a great general principle, that the whole Christian church should, so far as circumstances allow, be "of one accord, of one mind;" and that, not merely as it respects the chief doctrines and precepts of the gospel, but in reference to every matter which affects the religious character of the Christian, and the purity of his holy profession. It is no impeachment of the principle, even in its largest application,

that since the wide extension of Christianity, it has not been universally observed. So far as this unity *can* be obtained according to the spirit of the gospel, every true Christian would rejoice to see it; his own feelings, as well as the exhortation of St. Paul, would lead him to cultivate the disposition here recommended; and it will be his earnest wish that all who profess to be disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, partakers of the same faith and members of the same mystical body, may carry into the whole conduct of life the evidence of that communion; and while, like the Israelites of old, they drink of the same spiritual rock, they may encamp around a common tabernacle, and offer their sacrifices upon a common altar.

On a subject which admits of an exposition so large, and an illustration so varied, as that of the text, it is necessary, (if we would not greatly exceed the ordinary limits of a sermon,) to select for consideration some particular topic; and I know not that I can find one more useful or appropriate than is that of public worship. If it should appear that uniformity in this respect is a desirable thing, and that the services of the Church of England are of a scriptural

appealing to their own acknowledgments in the services of the Church. And if, through some events remarkably unfavourable, the priest's lips should cease to keep knowledge, and the people love to have it so, there would yet be found in the liturgy a redeeming principle—a voice, which would ere long be heard, and make the ears both of the people and of the priest to tingle. In the vicissitudes to which all human institutions are liable, it cannot be denied, that even a pure church—pure, I mean, as it respects the ordinances and formularies of devotion—may, at some time, stand in need of reformation; but the reformer who takes his stand upon the rampart of her solemnities, will either at once be heard with respect, or will possess in that strong hold an artillery of peculiar and almost irresistible power. False doctrine will be banished from her walls, and Truth be again heard with reverence in her temples.

It will add greatly to the force of this argument, if we bear in recollection the effect of established forms in enlisting on the side of the services of public worship, that reverence for antiquity which is natural to unpervverted minds. There can be no doubt that this sentiment is

natural; and it is not only innocent, but laudable and useful. A great writer, referring to this very point, observes, that “whatever makes the past, the distant, or the future, predominate over the present, advances us in the dignity of thinking beings;” and accordingly wise men have always approved and sanctioned a guarded indulgence of the feeling to which I allude. No blame in itself attaches to the veneration with which we regard and preserve the memorials of antiquity, the relics of ages which are past. But the sentiment grows in strength and intensity when we ourselves bear a natural relation to those whose memory we cherish; hence, as it has been well observed, we contemplate with fond reverence the hearth or the hall of our ancestors, the oak which our fathers have planted, the ancient landmarks which our fathers have set; and this feeling prevails, not only with regard to mere physical objects, but with regard to our most valued national possessions. Thus we pay honour to high and illustrious descent; we view with additional respect the throne itself, because of the ancient ensigns with which it is emblazoned; we doubly respect those laws which have taken root in the

very rock of our country; and even the civil and religious liberties which we hold so dear, become yet more precious when we regard them as the time-honoured treasures transmitted to us by our ancestors, a sacred inheritance, derived from brave, and good, and honourable men. Now such a feeling may doubtless be transferred into the service of a yet better cause; and it is this which is effected by the use of an established ritual. St. Paul himself seems to have felt something of this sentiment, although mingled with others of a still deeper nature, when he vented those impassioned wishes for the conversion and happiness of his countrymen, “to whom pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came.”* And what man is proof, or wishes to be proof against a degree of the same influence? Who can join in the devotional portions of the Psalms, without being influenced by the reflection, that in these strains the Psalmist of Israel, and all the fathers of those times, poured forth their hearts in the holy mountain? Who

* Rom. ix. 4, 5.

can unite in the short forms of prayer which our divine Master condescended to sanction or prescribe, without attaching to them a value correspondent to the authority which gave them? And what a security then does this principle afford in all its extensive application for the maintenance of truth! and how great in this view is the tendency of established forms to engage the innocent prejudices of our nature on the side of public worship!

(2.) Through the means of such a service in our congregations, there would, in the next place, be *an end to many of those divisions which distract the harmony of the Christian world.*

It must needs be that offences will come, and no precautionary measures and no appearance of cordiality can effectually prevent them. But how much brighter would be the prospect of religious peace, if men walked by the same rule in the ordinances of external worship! Where men walk in this respect by different rules, even though they profess in substance to hold the same essential doctrines of the gospel, how apt are they, as the experience of history too plainly demonstrates, to regard each other with an unfriendly disposition; a disposition

which, in the past days of our country, arrayed against each other some of the best men of their time, and has left an indelible stain upon the age in which they lived !

The feeling of which we here speak, grows out of the infirmity of human nature. It is not to be charged exclusively upon *one* class of Christians; it appears to have its influence among all classes; and in some cases, as it seems, the repulsive power which exists between different communities and different individuals, is increased in proportion to the very nearness of their approach in essential principles. Unless there be either, on the one hand, an absolute indifference to all religion—and indifference is not always tolerant—or, on the other hand, that *charity* which *thinketh no evil*, external divisions will but too often be attended by a disposition unamiable in itself, unpropitious to public order, unfriendly to personal religion.

(3.) And this leads me to notice as a third advantage which would arise from uniformity of worship, *the way in which it would accredit the cause of Christianity.*

The scoffer and the infidel would thus be

deprived of one of their most popular objections. The *minute* discrepancies among Christians, comparatively few persons have leisure or inclination to canvass; but it requires neither time nor talents to discover that those who profess to draw their creed from the same book of Revelation, are publicly and widely at variance, and irreligion avails itself of the fact, to cast discredit upon them all. When, in the primitive times, “the multitude of them that believed were” manifestly “of one heart and of one soul,” * associated by the bond of external fellowship as well as of heavenly charity, their religion carried with it a strong recommendation even to heathens; it was seen and felt by many that such effects were to be traced to no ordinary principle—that the tree must be good of which such were the fruits. The reproach of disunion was then unheard; one of the most dangerous and deadliest weapons of scepticism had not yet been forged; and Christianity, however slenderly attended, walked forth in her native loveliness, surrounded by her family of love. Oh! when shall the scoffer of this world cease to triumph in our disunion!

* Acts iv. 32.

When shall the unbeliever be compelled to exclaim : “ See how these Christians love one another ! ”

(4.) And while enumerating the benefits which would result from scriptural uniformity of worship, can we omit to mention what every Christian heart must feel and rejoice in, the sympathy of kindred spirits while offering common supplications at the throne of grace, or joining in the same ascriptions of thanksgiving and praise ?

There is, indeed, to the devout mind, something peculiarly touching and impressive in this association of united worshippers ; and the pious writer of so many of our sacred songs, who tells how delightful it is to see a whole assembly thus occupied in devotion, singing and praying with united voices, as well as with correspondent affections, is not less true to nature and to the best emotions of the soul, than to the holiest and highest examples. Who can doubt, that at the dedication of the temple, and on the festive occasions when the thousands of Israel chaunted the psalms of their inspired penmen, there was in that very concert of voices a warmth and solemnity of devotion,

which would at once soothe, and chasten, and elevate the soul? Who can question the reality of that pure enjoyment experienced by the early Christians in their common offerings of prayer and praise, when driven to worship even in dens and caves of the earth? But we have higher examples. If we ascend up to heaven, we find there the exalted purity of devotion rendered still more impressive by the union of kindred voices, the universal concert of the same songs of triumph. Hear them at the creation when “the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.”* Listen with the prophet to their responsive strains when “one cried unto another and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts. The whole earth is full of his glory.”† Behold at the birth of the Messiah that “multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men.”‡ Follow them as, according to the prophetic description in the 24th Psalm—a description not at variance with the realities of Heaven—they attended the ascension of the

* Job xxxviii. 7.

† Is. vi. 3.

‡ St. Luke ii. 14.

Redeemer, and in answering companies cried out, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle;—the Lord of Hosts, he is the King of glory." Pass on to the visions of the Apocalypse, and what have we there but an evidence of the same holy sympathy in a common worship? "I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."*

And again, when that "great multitude which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, was seen to stand before the throne and before the Lamb, they cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb; and all the angels fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen, blessing, and glory, and wis-

* Rev. v. 11, 12.

dom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever." * And when the will of God shall be done on earth as it is done in Heaven, why may not the same language of adoration be universally heard? Why may there not be this sympathy of feeling, this transcript of the heavenly world, among the congregations of the world below? Or who shall say that in the degree in which this resemblance shall take place in them, as men shall be one in heart and one in worship, there will not be a more perfect approach to the harmony and the felicity of Heaven? In the same apocalyptic visions, the beloved disciple represents every creature "which is in Heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea," as saying, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." †

But descriptions of this nature, whether drawn from the pure worship of Heaven, or the anticipated brightness of the latter day, are not to be urged in argument beyond their legitimate bounds. We admit that they are neither in

* Rev. viii. 9, 10.

† Rev. v. 13.

themselves accommodated to the present condition of mankind, nor do they demonstrate the obligation of all Christian assemblies to adopt the same forms of public worship. It is sufficient if they serve to show us the excellency of that system so far as it *can* be adopted; how much it adds to the cordiality of Christian feeling, and elevates the tone of Christian devotion.

II. We have hitherto proceeded upon a *supposition* rather than a fact. We have argued on the principle that there exists a system of public worship, adapted to the wants of a Christian congregation, and such in substance as the apostles themselves or their immediate successors would have sanctioned. This, it may be said, is a mere hypothesis. Where shall we find such a rule? Without intending the slightest reflection upon any conscientious Christian, upon any man who, after his own way, is worshipping the God of his fathers, I answer, that such is the service of the Church of England; and that, without any pretence to perfection, the liturgy of the Church has on these grounds high claims to respect and veneration.

With regard to the intrinsic excellence of the liturgy, I would in place of all discussion,

and for the sake of brevity appeal to your own judgment and experience, whether, in addition to the important circumstance of its giving the people their part to sustain in the public service, it be not the direct tendency of it to awaken those devotional feelings, and to express those sentiments which become us when bending before the mercy-seat. What man who profits by the lessons which it so persuasively suggests, can be ignorant of his own guilty and helpless condition, of the foundation upon which his hope for eternity must be built, or of the abundant mercy of God in Christ Jesus to all those who, with hearty repentance and true faith, turn unto him? In what terms more scriptural and more appropriate can we confess our manifold transgressions, or solicit the blessings of the Holy Spirit, or magnify the riches of redeeming grace, or celebrate in general that goodness which is universal and which endureth to all generations? So wisely have these services been framed, that while every individual, whatever be his personal condition, may find here the specification of his own wants, there is none in which the entire body of the Christian church may not cordially and properly join. The whole course of our ser-

vices is suited to raise the affections, and, through the inspiration and influence of the Holy Spirit, to purify and prepare us for that better world, where these brief and intermitted aspirations of prayer and praise will be converted into songs of everlasting triumph.

In turning to the other point just noticed, the recommendation of the liturgy from its *antiquity*, it may be observed, that in the habitual use of these forms we are walking by the same rule which was followed in the early ages of the church; and if there be any justice in the remarks already offered concerning that principle of the mind which leads us to look with veneration to what is ancient and established, we have a right to press this argument in favour of our national worship.

So ancient is the use of liturgies in the Church of Christ, that in the primitive Christian congregations, however distant from each other, they seem to have been universally adopted. In the lapse of ages they suffered much by various corruptions, yet even in that state, such, we are told, was in many respects the agreement among them all, as to render it highly probable that the original forms were delivered to the several churches by the apostles

or their immediate successors. It is admitted, that the service of the Church of England does not claim for itself generally such high prescription of antiquity; but that some of its prayers and doxologies are to be traced to the earliest times of the Church cannot be questioned; and this, at least, is certain, that in the mode and spirit of our worship we follow the example of the primitive confessors and martyrs, and the Christians of the following ages. And if we have not throughout the same services, yet knowing that our venerable reformers were most careful to “preserve what was primitive and good in the liturgies of other Churches,” * and that several of those eminent men sealed the truth with their blood, what claim of reverence, it may be asked, can a liturgy possess of which ours is destitute? or when shall a race of men be expected to arise, who, in wisdom, and moderation, and piety, in the opportunity of testifying their love for the Word of God, and in the holy courage and patience with which they yielded up their lives in the defence of it, shall be superior to these, or shall be remembered with equal gratitude and

* Bishop Bull.

affection by future generations? While we meditate upon the services of this sacred place, how many are the recollections which expand and solemnize the mind! Thus in spirit, and partly in the very words, worshipped the glorious company of the apostles, the goodly fellowship of the Christian prophets, the noble army of Christian martyrs. Thus it was that the confessors of our own land, those who under God established primitive truth in these realms, lifted up their hands towards the mercy-seat of the Holy Oracle; thus worshipped our fathers. In the use of these formularies, myriads who have finished their course, found their faith invigorated, their hopes confirmed, their sorrows relieved, their passage through the valley of death cheered by the light of immortality. On every returning sabbath ten thousand congregations in the land of our nativity, and many in distant countries, are engaged in the same holy service with ourselves, and are with one mouth glorifying our common Father. There is in that thought a link between absent friends, an association of feeling, which no distance can destroy. There may be some, perhaps, in this congregation,

who have beloved relatives in foreign regions—possibly some parent whose child is in another hemisphere; affection follows him to his destination, but it is with the painful thought that oceans are between them, and that the daily intercourse of kindness exists no longer. Would it not be refreshing to the heart of that parent, to ascertain at any specified time what was the occupation, what the attitude in which he was placed, what the words which he uttered? Would it not be doubly delightful if those words and that attitude implied an attention to his highest interests, and had a tendency to make him wiser and better? Let it be granted then, that in those distant countries he has the privilege of joining in the public service of the Church of England, and that comfort is at hand; there is an additional satisfaction that the parent can then feel, that he and his child are, at stated times, in the same posture of devotion, and with the same words presenting themselves before God. Every returning sabbath will be welcomed by this reflection: “In these means of grace I can hold special communion with my beloved child; the confessions, the supplications, the thanksgivings which proceed

from his lips, proceed also from mine. And what can I desire more than that he should experience their salutary impression! And what better pledge can I have for the divine blessing upon him, than that thus he may continue to worship, and by the grace of God, walk according to this rule all the days of his life!"

But to take a more general view. We are not ignorant that multitudes of our countrymen are, on account of the extended commercial empire of Great Britain, to be found in remote parts of the world; and that our mariners are continually passing from their native home to almost every region of the globe. Is it not a desirable thing, that in every place, especially if it belong to the crown of England, they should find, as far as possible, the religious privileges of their native land? Is it not greatly to be wished, that those who by their continued absence on a foreign shore, add so largely to the wealth and power of Britain, and those too who conduct into our harbours the treasures of every climate, should share in the fullest extent in our religious advantages? How different would be the condition of "those that

go down to the sea in ships, that do business in the vast waters,"* if on reaching the haven where they would be, they could generally find there the same benefits of public worship, which not a few of them, it is hoped, have valued at home ! And who that appreciates aright our admirable Liturgy, and has any gratification in the communion of saints, would not rejoice to learn, that in every part of the globe were erected kindred spires pointing to heaven, and that crowds of Christian worshippers entered into those gates with thanksgiving, and into those courts with praise ! Shall it be said, that this is the sentiment of a narrow selfishness ? On the contrary, under the impression which we have of the excellence of the Church of England, it is a sentiment of the purest charity, founded upon a desire to see the knowledge of the Lord extensively diffused, with all the aids and assistances which, under the divine blessing, tend to render it permanently effective.

This is an age of great missionary exertion, and every friend to piety and order, to the religion of his country, and to the best interests of mankind, will observe with satisfaction, that

* Ps. lvii. 23.

in this blessed work, the Church of England is now taking her just and honourable station. Within the last few years more especially, she has given herself with increased energy to this Christian duty ; and her accredited ministers are at this day labouring with the fairest promise of success for the conversion of the Heathen. Now, if in any country it be desirable that Christian assemblies should have the benefit of a Liturgy, this is particularly to be desired for the congregations recently gathered in those dark parts of the world. Every argument for the use of a formulary of devotion, which applies to a civilized and Christian people, is applicable with special force to such congregations ; they are necessarily in training and pupillage ; they have need of every help for devotion ; they want to have impressed continually upon their minds, and by the most inviting and effectual way, the great truths of revelation. And as without a Liturgy they must depend entirely upon the minister, his death may not improbably leave them as sheep without a shepherd. Instances might easily be cited, where very promising appearances have thus been destroyed as in the bud ; and experience justifies the assertion,

that amongst the best means to deepen and perpetuate the work of religious improvement in such circumstances, is the use of a scriptural form of public worship. Neither let it be forgotten, that in this respect, the prepossessions of large communities of men hitherto unacquainted with Christian truth, are in favour of such a system. Both Mahometans and Hindoos, as we are assured, attach a great value to forms; and when on their proposing to the missionaries the very natural question, "How do you worship?" and the Book of Common Prayer has been put into their hands, they have been known, it is said, to spend the whole night in reading it.

In urging therefore the claims of the two great Societies for which I have this day the privilege to solicit your support, I would venture to take my stand, simply on this ground, that the one by the system which it pursues *chiefly*, although by no means exclusively, at home; and the other by its labours abroad, are engaged in promoting the best interests of mankind; and in addition to great benefits already conferred by them, have the fairest prospects of increasing usefulness. To my reverend brethren

who belong to the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, I might confidently put the question, whether by its copies of the Scriptures, and the Prayer Book, and other publications, it has not rendered to them very important aid in their parochial labours. For the successful exertions of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, we appeal at once to the flourishing Episcopal Church of the United States of America; a church which might possibly be the means of rekindling the lamp upon our own altars, if, in the vicissitudes of human things, it should ever be extinguished: and while following this Society in its progress through our present American colonies, and in the recent extension of its labours to British India, we may be allowed to indulge the hope, that as it is the oldest of our Missionary Institutions, so it may through the divine blessing, be among the best and most effective of them. It has already eminently been honoured as an instrument of good, and a boundless field of usefulness is now opening before it.*

* It is not the intention of the author to affirm, with respect to either these or any other religious institutions, that they are

Finally, let it be permitted me to express a hope, that the statements which you have heard this day may not be without benefit to yourselves; if they should serve to convince any individual hitherto careless and inattentive, of the value of the Church of England, or to confirm and increase attachment to the Liturgy, where a regard for it already exists, they will have answered no trivial purpose. It may occasionally happen, that the ministers of religion are occupied in pursuing an argument, (as indeed is the case in the present instance,) which almost precludes them from giving, at the time, all the prominence they could wish to the saving truths of the gospel, and some casual hearer may thus lose, in a great measure, the benefit of their ministrations: it frequently happens, that neither in their exposition of some particular doctrine or precept of the Scriptures, nor in their appeal to the con-

incapable of improvement; and it is with great satisfaction that he refers to the intended revision of the Tracts by the committee of one of these societies, and to the resolutions recently adopted with respect to the slaves upon the Codrington estates, by the other. He ventures to indulge the persuasion, that these plans of improvement for ameliorating the condition of that unhappy race, will be effective and complete.

sciences of men, can they satisfy their own sense of the obligation imposed on them, or speak with the energy which becomes the messenger of God to a guilty world; and however great be their faithfulness, and however eminent their success, the revolution of a few years consigns them to the grave. What a blessing is it in all these cases, that whilst the Liturgy remains, you cannot be deprived of the gospel. The very confessions, the responses, the prayers, and thanksgivings which you utter with your own mouths, still testify to you the gospel of the grace of God, and that too in terms, than which none can be more simple, more intelligible, more persuasive. Let us thank God then for the advantages which he has so mercifully vouchsafed to us! Let us entreat of him to give us his Holy Spirit, that we may be enabled to make a right use of them; and may the effect of our religious services be visible in our dispositions and our lives! in our zeal for the glory of God, in our love to the Redeemer, in our charity towards all men!

THE END.

LONDON:

IBOTSON AND PALMER, SAVOY STREET, STRAND.

The Gospel Message.

A SERMON

PREACHED DECEMBER 21, 1828,

IN

THE CHAPEL OF FARNHAM CASTLE,

AT

AN ORDINATION

HELD BY THE

LORD BISHOP OF WINCHESTER.

BY THE

REV. W. DEALTRY, B.D. F.R.S.

RECTOR OF CLAPHAM,

AND CHANCELLOR OF THE DIOCESE OF WINCHESTER.

LONDON:

JOHN HATCHARD AND SON, 187, PICCADILLY;

AND H. N. BATTEN, CLAPHAM.

1829.



TO

THE RIGHT REVEREND

CHARLES RICHARD,

LORD BISHOP OF WINCHESTER,

THIS SERMON,

PUBLISHED BY HIS LORDSHIP'S COMMAND,

IS MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED.

A SERMON,

&c.

ISAIAH lii. 7.

“ How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace ; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation ; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth ! ”

AMONG the events connected with the ancient church, there are few more remarkable than was the Babylonish captivity : and the unhappy condition of the Jewish people during that period is a subject of frequent notice in the sacred writings. To know that Jerusalem was laid waste, and the temple, which God had honoured with the special symbol of His presence, was utterly destroyed, must have been a source of deep affliction to every individual of that nation who venerated either the country or the religion of his fathers : and it was a natural effect of his

depression, that he should sit down by the waters and weep; his harp hung upon the willows, himself incapable of singing in a strange land the songs of Zion.

To these captives the prophet here announces the tidings of deliverance. Anticipating the decree of Cyrus, which was in due time to restore them to their country, he speaks of that period as already arrived. In the visions of prophecy he contemplates the bearers of this intelligence, as hastening over the mountains to proclaim it, and expresses his admiration at the sight. But in the deliverance of that people, there is shadowed forth to us a greater event: and this passage is accordingly cited* by St. Paul as applicable to the days of the gospel; when to the Gentile, as well as to the Jew, should be proclaimed the message of redemption, and all nations should be invited to hear it.

We shall consider these words, therefore, principally with reference to the Christian dispensation. They present, according to the usual style of Hebrew poetry, the same subject under somewhat different views: and scarcely shall we find, in the writings of the evangelical prophet himself, in so short a passage, a more

* Rom. x. 15.

attractive and more striking description of the gospel message. May our meditations upon it contribute, through the divine aid, to fix in our minds a deeper sense of the excellence of the gospel, and a more earnest desire to make known and to extend the blessings of it!

I. (1) The gospel is represented, then, as a publication of *peace*.

To the captive Jew, this term would be sufficiently intelligible: he knew, from the existing condition of his countrymen, that the Almighty was against them: and under this conviction, he must have felt, that there was no peace either for them or for himself, till it should please God to turn again their captivity, and restore them to their lost inheritance. And what in a spiritual sense is the state of the whole human race? *All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*;* they are alienated from Him, by the original and inherent depravity of the mind, and *enemies to Him by wicked works*; sinful by nature, and sinners by practice. This is true of every man, so long as he follows the corrupt inclinations of his own heart. He may have a fair reputation in the world, but there is

* Rom. iii. 23.

no peace between him and his God. And what inward peace can there be to those who are under the influence of an evil heart? There can be *no peace to the wicked*.^{*} Suppose even that they never reflect upon the justice of God, and apprehend nothing from His wrath; yet without the control of a holy regulating principle, they will be continually harassed by conflicting passions; and life will wear away amidst troubles and distractions, from which they cannot escape. The gospel it is, then, which speaks to us of peace. It points out to us the way of being reconciled to God by faith in Christ Jesus; by Him it gives the assurance of rest to our souls. He died to *procure* peace for us, and lives to *bestow* it: not such *as the world giveth*, a vain, and shadowy, and unsubstantial thing; but a solid and satisfying peace; a peace *which passeth all understanding*.

This was the promise of our Lord to His disciples in the last address which preceded His crucifixion.† This was the subject of His first benediction to that little flock, after He had risen from the dead; *Peace be unto you*.‡

(2.) The gospel is described, further, as a message of *salvation*.

^{*} Isa. xlviii. 22. † John xiv. 27. ‡ John xx. 19, 21, 26.

Before the birth of the Messiah, it was announced by an angel of the Lord, that His name should be called **JESUS**: because He should *save His people from their sins*:* He was to save them from the guilt and dominion of sin in this world, and from the consequences of it in the world to come;—from the *guilt* of sin, for by faith in Him the sinner is justified before God;—from the *power* of sin, for by the influence of the Holy Spirit dwelling in our hearts, *sin shall not have dominion over us*;† *If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed*:‡—from the future consequences of sin, for he *that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life*;§ he shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.¶ Hence the salvation set before us in the gospel is, in some important senses, a *present* salvation; commencing upon earth, carried forward in the progressive advancement of the true disciple of Christ by the sanctification of the Spirit, and consummated and perfected in that state, where temptation and suffering and death have no place, and happiness is unmixed and eternal. And for these blessings we are

* Matt. i. 21.

† Rom. vi. 14.

‡ John viii. 36.

§ John iii. 36.

¶ Ib. v. 24.

taught to look to a crucified Saviour; as *the propitiation for our sins*, as *the Author and Finisher of our faith*, the source of our spiritual life, and the giver of life eternal.

(3.) The concluding clause of the passage represents the gospel, yet further, as assuring those who cordially believe it, of the constant protection of Divine Providence: *That saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth.*

We do not imagine that the pious Jew, even while in captivity, had any doubt of the Divine power, or questioned the existence of an *overruling Providence*: he was well persuaded, that *the Lord reigneth*;* *that He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and that none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest thou?*† But where was the interposition of that Providence in the behalf of himself and his countrymen? God seemed to have rejected His people. The message, then, is meant to assure them, that they were not forgotten: “**THY GOD REIGNETH**: He is still *thy* God: He hath not forsaken or forgotten thee; He still regards thee as His peculiar people; and as the Governor of the world, He will yet exercise His power for the

* Ps. xciii. 1.

† Dan. iv. 35.

enefit of His church. *He* reigneth, and who shall withstand Him?"

Such, too, is the language of the gospel. To Jesus Christ, the great Head of the church, that church *which He hath purchased with His own blood,* is given all power in heaven and in earth.†* He watches over it in its trials; He protects it in its dangers; and disposes of all events with a view to its permanent welfare. And to every faithful member of His church has He given the promise of His abiding presence. In that single fact, as associated with the power of Christ, there is a ground of hope which may sustain his people amidst all the storms of this probationary state; an assurance that all things shall *work together for their good*; that they have a Saviour full of power, as he is full of love; and hence that *neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,‡* shall make void his promises, or separate them from His protection.

II. The delight expressed by the prophet, in announcing the glad tidings of the text, may be supposed to show the feelings of all the children of the captivity, when they heard the

* Acts xx. 28.

† Matt. xxviii. 18.

‡ Rom. viii. 38.

intelligence of their freedom. But as he contemplated a liberty of a far more exalted and enduring character, than is the deliverance from worldly oppression, it is to this higher subject that he looked with peculiar delight ; and to this his glowing language is chiefly to be ascribed.

And who can doubt that thus welcome will be the message of the gospel to every man who has learned to take a right view of himself and his Saviour? Let him be taught by the Holy Spirit to appreciate his own character, to see the evil of sin, the multitude of his offences against God, his subjection to the great enemy of mankind—the bondage of the soul—his utter inability to atone for his transgressions and to escape into a state of spiritual liberty, his total destitution of any plea, as derived from himself, which might avail to deliver him from the wrath to come, and to bring him into a state of reconciliation with his offended Maker : let him then be directed to the love of God in Christ Jesus ; let him hear the messengers of Christ publishing the glad tidings of salvation in the full meaning of the term ; let him be assured that to *him* is the gospel sent, with the offer of present peace, of deliverance from eternal death,

and the prospect and promise of eternal life ;— to such a man how acceptable would be the message ! He would see the suitableness of this gospel to his own case : he would discover in it a remedy for all his troubles, a refuge into which he might run and be safe. “ *How beautiful upon the mountains,*” he would be ready to exclaim, “ *are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings !* How little have I deserved that God should be thus merciful to me, a miserable sinner ! that after all my ingratitude He should reveal himself as ready to forgive ; and when I had so awfully exposed myself to His wrath, should, instead of casting me off for ever, condescend to offer me reconciliation with Himself, and admission into His kingdom ! How soothing is this message of peace ! How welcome the promise of salvation ! How animating to know, that He, who reigneth in the heavens, is my *God for ever and ever, and that He will be my guide even unto death !*” *

We have reason indeed to believe, that from the period, when the great subject of the gospel dispensation was first announced, although then but partially understood, it has ever been the occasion of joy. The promise made to our

* Ps. xlviii. 14.

gree in which our views are that we enter into the spirit of the message, be led to adopt the language with feelings like his own; *the mountains are the feet of good tidings, that publisheth good tidings of good, that publisheth unto Zion, Thy God re-*

III. And here the question put by every one of us is, "What is the reception of this gospel? I profess, at the season of the year, when the advent of my Redeemer is proclaimed: is this my reception? I received the message listening to it as a matter of duty, or as the statement of fact, and, by God's grace, I am now whom it describes. I have the truth and the life, I have the sonner, have I the obedient, I have the Spirit and the power of this nation." present position.

ed with the proclamation. To us is the message exalted to its consequence, everlastingly upon us to which we are brought into the ignorance of the teachers well known, * may we, saith the prophet, preach any which we have heard.† Which is without the power to preach the word and it cannot be contrary to the doctrines of the Bible. We do ex- hibit the Chris- tian grand lead-

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first parents concerning the future Messiah, was expressly intended to give to them consolation, and to inspire them with hope: and the patriarch, who, probably by the intended sacrifice of his son upon one of the mountains of Moriah, was divinely enabled to look forward to the day of the Son of Man, *saw it*, we are told; *and was glad*.* He beheld in that future period, a season of blessing to all the families of the earth. He believed in the Messiah for his own salvation; he rejoiced in contemplating him as the Saviour of the world.

' If we pass onward to the time of Christ's appearance upon earth, with what words of exultation was His advent published by the heavenly host! by those who have never been at enmity with their Maker, and have nothing to fear from His justice or His wrath.: Neither was this world—the world which so generally rejected Him—without the testimony of a similar feeling. While Herod and Jerusalem were troubled at the news, there were some who, under the guidance of a heavenly light, travelled far to present to Him their homage; and when on their approach to Bethlehem, the star, which they had seen in the east, appeared again to

* John viii. 56.

conduct them, they *rejoiced with exceeding great joy* :* they gladly hastened to pay to Him the first tribute of that adoration, which He was in due time to receive on the wider manifestation of his glory, when *all kings shall fall down before Him, all nations shall serve Him*.†

And if we extend our view beyond the confines of the world which now is, and ask what are the feelings with which this great subject is regarded in the world of bliss, we find that there it is the theme of universal praise, the common song of the innumerable company of saints and angels. We see not at this day, as we shall then see, the length and breadth and depth and height of that love, which has provided the means of reconciling the sinner unto God : we know not now, as we shall *then* know, what is comprehended in the terms *peace* and *salvation*, or the mighty benefits which we derive from His overruling providence : but even here it is permitted us to obtain some glimpses of that happiness which shall be the portion of *the just made perfect*, to know something of that love *which passeth knowledge*, to catch some portion of that spirit which animates the inhabitants of the realms of light. And according to the de-

* Matt. ii. 10.

† Ps. lxxii. 10.

gree in which our views are thus enlarged, and we enter into the spirit of the gospel, shall we be led to adopt the language of the prophet with feelings like his own ; *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace ; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation ; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth !*

III. And here the question may naturally be put by every one of us to his own conscience, “ What is the reception which I have given to this gospel ? I profess, more especially at this season of the year, while commemorating the advent of my Redeemer, to rejoice at these tidings : is this my real disposition ? Have I received the message of peace into my heart, listening to it as a message from heaven, believing it as the statement of eternal truth ; and, by God’s grace, having come to that Saviour whom it describes to me as *the way and the truth and the life,** the only hope and refuge of the sinner, have I yielded myself to His service in the obedience of faith ? Am I directed by His Spirit and walking in His light ? ” Inquiries of this nature are of importance to every

* John xiv. 6.

man who hears the record of the gospel; to the minister as well as to his people: for there is none *other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.** But, upon this occasion, it behoves me to advert more particularly to other considerations.

If to all of us this gospel of peace is sent, we are reminded by the solemnities of this day, that some of us are expressly set apart to publish it: we are ordained to be the preachers of these good tidings, and it is of the last importance to us, as well as to our hearers, that we should feel the obligations which by that appointment are laid upon us, and should conscientiously and faithfully discharge them.

So far as the observations already made tend to show the excellence and value of the gospel, they bear with great force upon this subject: and while I venture to offer a few remarks upon the duty of the Christian minister, I do so in the hope and persuasion, that it is useful to be reminded of these things, and to speak of them to each other, although they have often occupied our thoughts, and we are satisfied of their importance.

The persons who told of peace and salvation

* Acts iv. 12.

to the captive Jews, were well acquainted with their message, and are supposed by the prophet to have faithfully delivered it. To us is committed a trust inexpressibly more exalted in its nature, and more important in its consequences. *Our* office is to preach the everlasting gospel. How incumbent is it upon us to be well acquainted with the doctrine which we are sent forth to teach! so to enter into the spirit of it, that we may not through ignorance misrepresent or pervert it, but as teachers well *instructed unto the kingdom of heaven,** may *speak as the oracles of God!†* Though we, saith St. Paul, *or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.‡* Which of us can hear such a denunciation without determining, by the grace of God, to preach the truth in its purity? And to this end it cannot be sufficient merely to say nothing *contrary* to the truth, or to state the great doctrines of the gospel justly and correctly, when we *do* expound them: our preaching should exhibit throughout the spiritual character of the Christian system. That which was the grand leading argument of the apostles, *Christ crucified,*

* Matt. xiii. 52.

† 1 Pet. iv. 11.

‡ Gal. i. 8.

should be the prominent subject. There may be much that is excellent in our statements concerning the duties of morality, and much that is just in the enforcement of those duties; but to the gospel itself every thing is to be referred. From this are our principles and motives to be derived; upon this all morality is to be founded; and it may safely be affirmed, that there is no subject, whether of Christian faith or Christian practice, which is not essentially connected with the doctrine of a crucified Saviour. Good works spring out of a true faith, and of that faith Jesus Christ is specially the object.

The prophet represents the messengers of Cyrus as very *earnest* and *zealous* in their office. They *publish* peace and salvation; they proclaim their message even before they reach the habitations of the captives. As they hasten over the mountains, they take a station, we are to suppose, from which their voices may be heard at a distance, that those who are afar off may receive the earliest possible intelligence of the happiness which awaits them. The text gives the description of men who adopt the most effective means to fulfil the object of their mission.

Thus zealously and thus publicly is to be

proclaimed the message which is to carry *good tidings of great joy to all people*.* The minister of the gospel is not only to feel the great interests which it involves, but by his manner to prove that he feels them, and as much as possible to impress others with the same conviction. And can his heart be too much occupied in such a cause? Is it possible that he can expatiate upon such a subject as Christ crucified, and treat it like an ordinary matter? Is it possible that he can speak of *righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come*—subjects which appalled even a heathen ruler, and made him tremble before his prisoner—of the hope of a blessed immortality, of the terrors of the second death, of all that fills with adoration the courts of heaven, and carries despair into the regions of eternal woe;—can a man tell of realities like these, with the conviction also that the everlasting condition of all who hear him is involved in his message, and fail to publish and enforce it with all his might?

Look at the example of the great apostle of the Gentiles. Behold his energy of character, his undecaying zeal, his unwearied perseverance. With every allowance for difference of

* Luke ii. 10.

circumstances, was Christian zeal commendable in him, and is it not commendable now? Is Christian knowledge so general as to render exertion superfluous? Is the character of religion changed, or is the welfare of mankind less concerned in it? If it was the great object of his life to bring sinners to their Saviour, and to train them for heaven, is not that the object which we are to pursue? and are we not bound by every principle to pursue it, with an earnestness proportioned, in some measure, to its worth? So long as our zeal takes not its colour from human infirmities and human passions, but is regulated by the word of God; so long as we tread in the steps of those who did all things *decently and in order*, far from having to apologize for this zeal, we should feel that we act unworthily of our cause, if we possess it not.

The Christian teacher who acts in this spirit, will in the prosecution of his work, like the herald upon the mountains, endeavour to make himself heard by men of every description. He will not pay attention merely to the wise, and the learned, and the great; he will address himself also to the illiterate and the poor. They likewise stand in need of salvation; for them, as well as for others, the Son of God came

into the world, and to them pertain also the promise and the blessing. The gospel is intended for the benefit of all classes of society; it is suited to the wants of all men; to all men therefore the Christian minister will proclaim it; regarding himself, like the apostle, as a *debtor both to the wise and to the unwise,** he will testify to men of all classes *repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. †*

But shall we confine ourselves then to *general exhortations*? Shall we not, as opportunity serves, and the order of the church allows, and the piety of the church enjoins, ‡ endeavour to reach the hearts and consciences of men *individually*? What in this respect was the conduct of St. Paul? In that affecting farewell which he delivered to the elders of the church at Ephesus, he calls to their remembrance that during the whole time of his residence among them, *from the first day that he came into Asia, and for the space of three years, he had shewed and taught them publicly and from house to house, ceasing not to warn every one night and day. §*

* Rom. i. 14.

† Acts xx. 21.

‡ See the Ordination Service.

§ Acts xx. 18. 20. 31.

Such too was the practice of his fellow-labourers in the ministry ; *warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom.** Thus are we to make a *personal* application of the gospel ; considering the various habits, and feelings, and prejudices, and misconceptions of those who hear us ; adapting ourselves to their several conditions, and urging them by those arguments and exhortations which the state of each seems specially to demand. That this will require much prudence, much discrimination, a deep acquaintance with our own hearts, and an intimate knowledge of the scriptures, is unquestionable ; but such is the importance of the rule here recommended, and so materially will the success of our ministerial labours depend upon the observance of it, that we should never suffer it to escape from our recollection. General exhortations have undoubtedly their use ; but thoroughly to *do the work of an evangelist,†* by bringing the truth home to the heart, we must speak in terms which loudly proclaim to the conscience of the sinner, “ Thou art the man ;” and, as *faithful and wise stewards*, must give to each of the spiritual household his *portion of meat in due season.‡*

* Col. i. 28.

† 2 Tim. iv. 5.

‡ Luke xii. 42.

And this implies no small portion of *Christian courage*. How necessary to the first teachers of the gospel was that heroic fortitude by which they were so eminently distinguished, must be obvious to every reader of the New Testament. They had *trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, of bonds and imprisonment*: they had to bear their testimony to the truth in the presence of those whose displeasure was death; and sometimes so appalling was the danger, that even the great apostle himself, as if not without apprehension for his own steadfastness, solicited the prayers of his converts, that he might not fail in his duty, but that he *might open his mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, that therein he might speak boldly as he ought to speak.* *

From such trials we are at this day happily exempted; but is there no danger lest we should be *ashamed* of Christ and his words amidst a sinful generation? and instead of delivering our message in all its plainness, and with all its solemnity, should qualify and accommodate it, in some degree, to the taste and prejudices of those who hear us? If there be an inveterate formalist among us; a learned scep-

* Eph. vi. 19.

tic who is disposed to treat all religion with contempt ; a *disputer of this world*, who is nevertheless very courteous personally to ourselves ; a worldly-minded man, who has no objection to go with us, to a certain point, in the assertion of Christian truth, but who will view us with suspicion if we pass beyond that limit ; and especially if, among those to whom we look with habitual respect, there should be any whose authority is exerted to discredit the doctrines of the gospel, is there no danger lest we keep back some statements which may possibly be offensive, or virtually neutralize an important doctrine in order to avoid reproach ? Are we prepared to declare *the whole counsel of God*, and to take all consequences ? ready, for the sake of Christ and his gospel, to sacrifice reputation, interest, the regard even of those whom we love and honour ? determined not to sanction any other gospel, however widely it may have spread, and by whatever authority it may be supported ? Let us not imagine that this is a light or an easy thing. The Christian minister has often to lament how much he is tempted in such cases to shrink from the calls of duty ; and he has constant need to seek

strength and courage from Him who is the giver of every good and perfect gift.

Neither is it less important that the preacher of the gospel be influenced by a *spirit of kindness and of love*.

Such we may infer from the language of the prophet, was the disposition of the person who published glad tidings to the captive Jews. We see his benevolence in the manner of his proclamation, and in the speed with which he is supposed to hasten on his way. We are probably to consider him as himself a descendant of Abraham, sympathizing in the afflictions of his brethren, and rejoicing in their joy. The minister of Jesus Christ is to manifest a similar spirit: *speaking the truth in love*;^{*} addressing himself with kindness even to those who have no kindred feeling for him; and if compelled to use the language of rephension, he is not to forget that his errand is an errand of grace. This is a disposition which peculiarly *becometh the gospel*. It is a spirit which befits the herald of peace and salvation. The message is of love, and such should be the spirit in which it is delivered. And what circum-

• Eph. iv. 51.

can be more likely to secure candid
to conciliate esteem, or to win men
must? The labours of Saint Paul were
heartily blessed at Ephesus; and great was
action borne to him by that people; can
be surprised at it? He had not ceased to
every one night and day *with tears*.^{*}
What an impression must this have left upon
their minds, not of his earnestness only, but of
his love for their souls!

The minister of Christ will likewise have
occasion for *patience and forbearance*.

He must not be disappointed if he fail to
discover all the signs of success, which per-
haps he had expected. It may be his painful
lot, and for a considerable time, to stretch out
his hands to *a disobedient and gainsaying people*.

Notwithstanding all his earnestness, some pro-
bably will continue in a state of absolute in-
difference, caring *for none of these things*; some
will hear and approve, and continue as they
were; some who appeared to be sensible of
the importance of the gospel, and desirous to
be at peace with God, will gradually lose
that impression; some who seem to have
tasted the good word of God, and the powers of

* Acts xx. 31.

*the world to come,** and to be striving to *make their calling and election sure,†* will turn back to this present world ; and it will be necessary again and again to reprove, and rebuke, and exhort. This will require much forbearance and long-suffering ; but we must not be *weary in well doing.‡* The duty is ours, the event is with God ; and possessing *our souls in patience,* to Him we must learn to leave it.

And what does all this imply, but that the Christian minister should be a man of *a spiritual and heavenly mind,* governed in his own heart by the holy motives and dispositions of the gospel, and being *an example of the believers in word and conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity,§* living and walking in the light ? In order to preach the gospel with just effect, he must have imbibed its spirit, and manifest its holy influence. We may be as correct as possible in the exhibition of Christian doctrine ; but if there be no spiritual warmth and spiritual energy in our souls, and especially if our conduct be at variance with our profession, what reason have we to hope

* Heb. vi. 5.

† 2 Peter i. 10.

‡ Luke xxi. 19.

§ 1 Tim. iv. 12.

either that men will listen to the message, or that God will follow it by a blessing? The teachers chosen by our Lord had His spirit within them; and their *conversation was in heaven*.* From the fulness of their hearts they preached the gospel, and their whole lives bore witness to its power.

And while thus fulfilling the obligations of our sacred office in simplicity and Christian sincerity, we shall best consult our own peace of mind, and best *maintain a conscience void of offence*. Awful indeed is the condition of that minister, who never thinks of the trust committed to his charge, nor of the tremendous responsibility which awaits him! the more awful because he feels it not. To be awakened at length to a better mind, and to come, however late, to serious reflection, is an event supremely to be desired. But to such a man, how painful must it be, in this his better state, to dwell upon the dark and melancholy period which preceded it! He has occasion frequently to walk among the memorials of the dead; to look upon the graves of men who were formerly within reach of his instruction, but who are now in eternity. And

* Phil. iii. 20.

*the world to come,** and to be striving for *their calling and election sure,†* will be to this present world; and it will be again and again to reprove, and re-exhort. This will require much faith and long-suffering; but we must not *in well doing.‡* The duty is ours, the reward with God; and possessing *our souls in* to Him we must learn to leave it.

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And while thus fulfilling the obligations of our sacred office in simplicity and sincerity, we shall best consult our own peace of mind, and best maintain a consistent life of offence. Awful indeed is the conduct of a minister, who never thinks of the trust committed to his charge, nor of the responsibility which awaits him. It is awful because he feels it not. It is awakened at length to a fearful consciousness, however late. It is the event supremely to be dreaded. It is the state of a man, how painful, how degrading, how better state, to dwell upon the gloomy and melancholy period when the minister is on occasion frequently to visit the cemeteries of the dead: to look upon the graves of men who were formerly within his power of instruction, but who are now beyond his reach.

what must be the nature of his meditations ?
“ These were once of my flock, but they had a careless shepherd ; they were ignorant of the way of salvation, and I taught them not ; they were without Christ, and I preached Him not ; they lived in sin, and from me they had no warning ; they were strangers to peace, and from me they received not the true consolation. God be merciful unto me, and lay not this sin to my charge !” How different the reflections of that good and faithful servant, who, when standing amidst these records of mortality, can say of those whose remains are deposited beneath them, “ These, as I trust, were *my children*, and they *walked in truth*. Many were my infirmities, and much reason have I in the review of my ministrations to be humbled as in the dust, and to acknowledge myself an unprofitable servant ; but I bless God that he gave me the inclination to preach the gospel, and that, both in season and out of season, I spared no pains to bring men to Christ. Here I behold the fruit of my labours ; they adorned the gospel in their lives ; they died, I trust, in the Lord ; and unworthy as I am, I believe and am persuaded, that they shall be my *hope, and joy, and*

*crown of rejoicing in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming.”**

Do we ask, *Who is sufficient for these things?*† *Our sufficiency is of God.*‡ He alone can qualify us for this high vocation; He alone can crown our labours with success. For these benefits, then, we are to acknowledge our constant dependence upon Him, and daily and fervently to intreat for his Holy Spirit. Prayer is the very element in which we are to live and breathe; it is to be the constant habit of our minds. At the throne of grace we shall find a supply for all our necessities; and from the throne of grace we shall go forth with the best spirit, and the most persuasive arguments, and the most entire dependence upon God. The messenger may be feeble, but the word which he delivers is *quick and powerful*;§ and He who has promised that it shall *prosper in the thing whereto he sends it*,|| is the Lord Almighty. That promise will be assuredly fulfilled; the faithful minister will be blessed in his own soul, and he will see, by the evidences of divine grace upon his hearers, that he has not laboured in vain. Some careless persons

* 1 Thess. ii. 19.

† 2 Cor. ii. 16.

‡ 2 Cor. iii. 5.

§ Heb. iv. 12.

|| Isa. lv. 11.

will be brought to devout reflection ; some who were *dead in trespasses and sins*, will be quickened to a spiritual life ; and others who seemed to be only like a *bruised reed*, or as the *smoking flax*, will be *strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man*, and shine forth as lights in their generation. In this world, probably, we shall never be apprized of the full effect of our labours ; the seed which we cast into the ground may not for the present appear to take root ; but who can say that it shall not eventually bring forth, perhaps when we are in the grave, the *blade, and the ear, and the full corn in the ear* ? It may be our duty to sow in tears ; but we shall reap in joy : *He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.**

* Psalm cxxvi. 6.

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